PEOPLE

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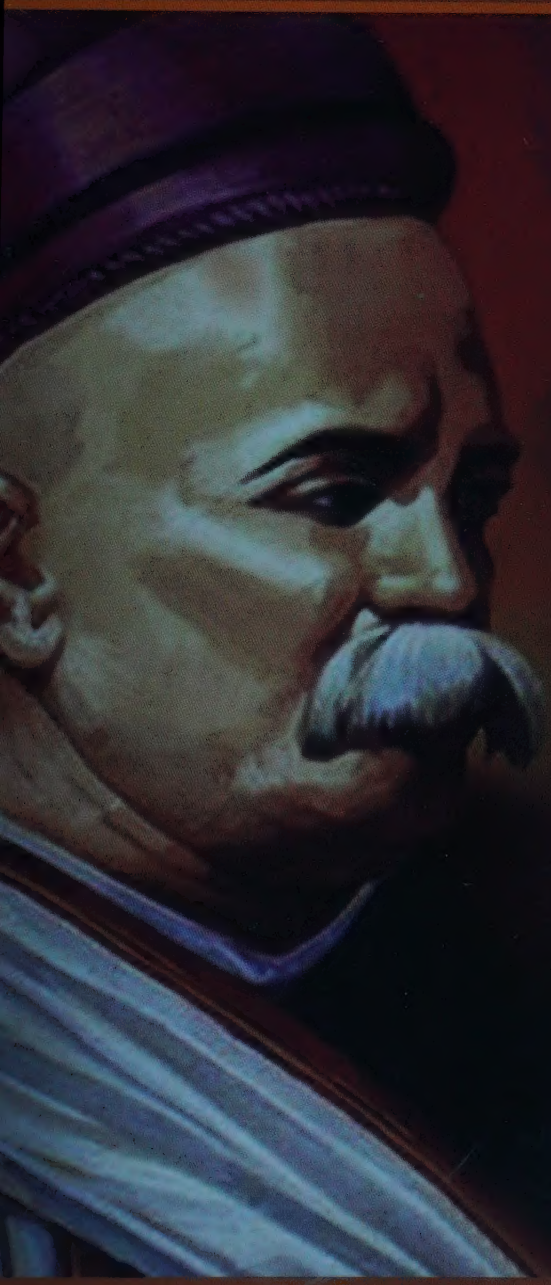
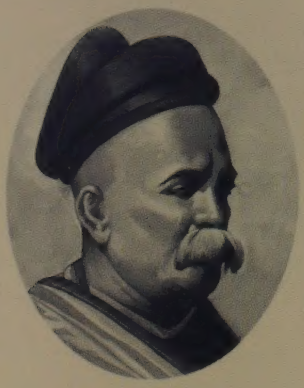
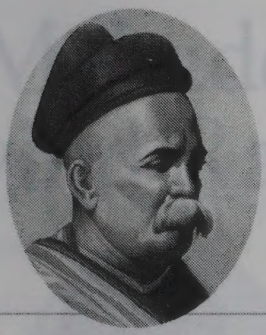


MAHADEO GOVIND RANADE

P J JAGIRDAR



With the establishment of British rule in India, began the tumultuous era of regression. The Indians had to struggle not only in the fields of economics and politics but also faced social and cultural degradation. During this era, many stalwarts came forward including Mahadeo Govind Ranade (1842-1901) for the emancipation of the society. A Judge of Bombay High Court, he worked extensively on the economic problems of India and, is known as the Father of the Indian Economics. Besides, he was a thinker, a social reformer and a historian, who never shied away from attacking the British administrators.



Mahadeo Govind Ranade

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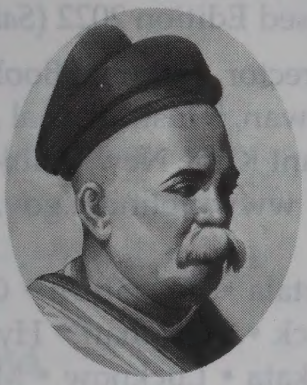

P J Jagirdar

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Contents

	Foreword	vii
1.	The Background	1
2.	The Early Years (1842 to 1871)	6
3.	Debut in Public Life (1866 to 1871)	27
4.	Devoted Son and Assiduous Citizen (1871 to 1878)	46
5.	Criticising British Administration (1878 to 1881)	62
6.	Serving Government and Serving People (1881 to 1893)	75

7. Promoting Education, Especially Among Women 87

8. His Impact on Politics and Economics 101

9. The Social Reform Movement (1884 To 1892) 117

10. The Man and his Personal Relations 131

11. As High Court Judge 146

12. Conclusion 163

Select Bibliography 169

Foreword

The History of India is a heroic saga of ceaseless toil, turmoil and struggle in the social, economic, political and spiritual fields against the forces of conservatism, darkness, decadence and alien hordes that invaded this country and established their dominion over it for limited periods of time.

Of these alien rulers, the last were the British, who established their sway over the country after the 1857 struggle and ruled it till 1947.

Many personalities were thrown up during this time to guide the destiny of India towards emancipation. Among these stalwarts was Mahadeo Govind Ranade. Tall, brilliant, strong and courageous, Ranade received his education in Poona and Bombay. Beginning his life as Marathi Translator in the Education Department of

the Government of Bombay, he became in turn Karbhari (or Administrator) of Akkalkote State, Nyayadhish (or Judge) at Kolhapur and finally a judge of the Bombay High Court.

Simultaneously he espoused all progressive movements and worked indefatigably particularly for social reforms like widow remarriage, education of women and education of the masses generally. He made a profound study of such diverse subjects as philosophy, religion, literature, history and economics.

The author has succeeded eminently in projecting in this book the personality of Ranade in its various facets, so that the scholar-poet emerges as a harmonised entity and born leader whose memory people will proudly cherish for many a long year.

New Delhi
October 20, 1971

B. V. KESKAR

1 THE BACKGROUND

About the time when Mahadeo Govind Ranade was born in the middle of the nineteenth century, India was on the eve of a great transition. The nature of the transition was difficult to interpret at the time. The British had, step by step, conquered the whole of the country and their authority had been established beyond dispute. They were now engaged in the task of consolidation. Law and order was firmly established. Great codes of law, such as the Civil Procedure Code and the Indian Penal Code, were promulgated and a proper judicial organisation was created to administer justice at various levels: this was a great contrast to previous regimes. A separate department started making roads and building canals. The Government began constructing railways and introduced telegraphs,

thereby amazing as well as pleasing the populace. Schools, colleges and universities imparting education of the Western type were opened. After several centuries, India was brought under one government, strong but alien, benevolent but imperialistic. The dazzling virtues of British rule tended to blind the intelligentsia to the essentially predatory nature of it. Not less important and perplexing were the developments in the economic sphere. With the improvement of ocean steamers, and with the extension of roads and the establishment of railways in the country, India was thrown open to commercial contact with the world; and this had a profound effect on Indian economy. In England a series of new inventions had already brought about an industrial revolution; when British machine-made goods, superior and cheaper, entered the Indian market, the handicrafts of Indian urban industries were hit hard; and many artisans, chiefly engaged in making textiles and metalware, were thrown out of employment. Indian farmers gained from the opening of the world market for their goods; but, poor as they were, they were now exposed to fluctuations in the world prices of their products. Moreover, an unfortunate series of famines caused a setback, as also heavy assessments of land revenue. In the sphere of cultural and social life, a similar process of change was occurring. The spirit of enquiry and freedom of thought in the West had induced growth of

scientific knowledge; India was, therefore, confronted with Britain's superiority not only in respect of military power and industrial productivity but also of scientific achievements and rational outlook. In this respect, India had not only made no progress but had also regressed. For centuries past India's cultural growth had been arrested owing to political subjection and instability. Indeed, culture had decayed. Indigenous learning was fossilised; religion had deteriorated into mere formal ceremonies and observances; social institutions, controlled by such superficial religion, developed customs which did not conform to morality, some of them being even inhuman. Notable among such customs were seclusion and utter subordination of women, infant marriage, the banning of widow-remarriage, untouchability and caste-hierarchy. The Western scientific outlook, like fresh air, began to be infused into India through the educational institutions of the Western type started in the first half of the nineteenth century. Inspired by what they imbibed from the West, a few bold spirits critically examined the prevailing religion and social customs and strove to bring them in consonance with reason and virtue. Bengal produced a host of reformers like Rammohan Roy and Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar. In western India, Balashastri Jambhekar, Dadoba Pandurang, Atmaram Pandurang, Dadabhai Naoroji, Jagannath Shankarshet, Jyotirao Phule, Gopal Hari Deshmukh (Lokahitavadi),

Karsandas Mulji and Narmadashankar belonged to the first generation of reformers; and Vishnushastri Pandit, Ranade, Bhandarkar, Modak and Agarkar were to follow in their footsteps. To sum up, in politics the British rule, firmly established, was unprecedentedly benevolent yet in its hidden nature exploitative and foreign; in economics, the breaking of isolation was in some ways beneficial but in others harmful; in the religious and social spheres, the import of the Western scientific outlook was disturbing age-long placidity and was evoking a passionate striving for fundamental reform.

The country had undoubtedly reached a state of degradation. India was conquered; it had become a subject country. And yet this very subjection had offered to it an opportunity to rise from its low position. To what extent would India look to the Western example in order to escape or transcend the prevailing state? Was traditional culture of no value whatsoever? To what extent, and in what manner, could India obtain happiness under a firmly-planted foreign rule? Ranade pondered over these questions and formulated his own answers. He expressed his profound thoughts ceaselessly through articles, memoranda, books, lectures and addresses and influenced the minds of intellectuals. As a thinker, he made distinct contributions in all spheres of national life, politics, economic, religion and social institutions.

Besides his official duties, every moment of his day was spent for some national cause, writing, discussing, organising. For his weighty views and high character, he commanded universal respect. The nation was in transition; and Ranade was the stalwart who impelled it in the proper direction.

2 THE EARLY YEARS (1842 TO 1871)

Ancestry and Boyhood

Ranade came of the Brahmin community. Originally, this community lived in the Konkan, which is a narrow strip between the Sahyadri ranges and the Arabian Sea. After the foundation of the Maratha kingdom, and particularly after the rise of the Peshwas, there was steady migration of this community from the Konkan to the relatively fertile land to the east of the Sahyadris. Following the trend of the time, Bhagwantrao Ranade from the village Mobharpacheri or Pacherisada in Chiplun taluk of Ratnagiri district left the Konkan about the middle of the eighteenth century and settled down in Karkamb near Pandharpur. He was a profound scholar of astrology and his wife was devout and saintly. His only son, Bhaskarrao, found employment in the service

of the Chief of Sangli, first as a soldier and later as a clerk. Known for his uprightness, he was later given the more responsible position of a Vakil of the Sangli Chief to the East India Company's Government. His son Amritrao entered the service of the British and rose to the position of Mamlatdar. He was tall and stout and was a good horseman. He was also learned in Sanskrit, particularly in religious works and astrology. One of his four sons, Govindrao, also entered the service of the British, as a clerk, with prospects to rise to a position similar to that of his father. "The men of the Ranade family were tall, brilliant, strong and valiant, industrious, and generous of heart," says Mrs. Ramabai Ranade in her *Reminiscences.*

In this middle-class cultured family of robust health, generous instincts and industrious habits, Ranade was born on January 18, 1842, in his father's house in Niphad in Nasik district. His father, Govindrao, was then a head clerk earning what was in those days a moderate salary of about thirty-five rupees per month.

The child Mahadeo survived a mishap when he was two and a half years old. On the recommendation of his superior officer, Govindrao had been appointed by the Kolhapur State as Court Reader in the office of the Karbhari. As his wife Gopikabai was pregnant, he alone went ahead to Kolhapur, leaving his family behind. Gopikabai gave birth to a daughter named Durga. In due course of time the family, accompanied by a

relation Vithukaka, started on the journey from Niphad to Kolhapur. The journey was by bullock-cart, the road was rough, and travelling was done by night. The cart was rolling along with a rattle; Gopikabai had held the infant to her bosom and had Mahadeo by her side, wrapped up heavily in blankets. Vithukaka followed the cart at some distance. In the cool breeze of the night, everyone was gradually overcome by sleep. None knew when Mahadeo slipped off from the cart and fell down. It was quite some time before the escort came along on horseback, and heard the child quietly announcing, "Vithukaka, I have fallen here." A bare statement of fact!

When the boy Mahadeo was brought to Kolhapur, there were no schools of the type we are now familiar with. Imparting education through a standardised type of schools was one of the reforms introduced by the British in India. Kolhapur knew no such reforms. But at the time Govindrao was appointed there, Kolhapur State was being administered by a British political agent, and the British had appointed men of their confidence to all key posts, ignoring the old sardars. These men had been educated and trained in British India. They tried to introduce in Kolhapur administrative reforms such as schools, telegraphs, and extension and improvement of roads. A Marathi school was founded in 1848 and an English school soon after. Mahadeo was put in these schools as and when they were started. The boy, unlike others, was so fascinated by his lessons that he

used to mutter them to himself and write letters and figures with fingers on walls; this recreation sufficed for him. Even when playing in the streets, he would write multiplication tables in the dust.

Besides this extraordinary liking for studies, other traits evinced by the boy were an unusual amount of shyness and an inherent dislike of ostentation. He would hide his bracelets under his sleeves and cover his necklace with the end of the dhoti; he did not like to put on these ornaments, without which, he once remarked, less well-to-do boys got on well enough. His shyness also made him uncommunicative, so that he made a poor impression. Even his mother felt that he was dull, and was greatly anxious about his future. However, he passed his examinations easily; but he did not bother to announce the results even to his family, partly out of shyness and partly out of modesty, though others attributed his silence to lack of common liveliness.

The household consisted of father, mother, younger sister Durga, an aunt and himself. His daily routine was typical of a boy of a Brahmin family of his times; recitation of the *Purushasukta* and elaborate *Sandhya* prayer constituted necessary parts of it. He rarely spoke to his father; between them there was deep affection combined with severe reserve, as was customary in those days. The mother anxiously watched him grow and was rather worried by his lack of smartness. His younger sister Durga was his playmate: he played a girl's

game, *sagargotya,* with her. While the Ranades lived on the ground floor of Government quarters, the first floor was occupied by the family of Janardanpant Kirtane, the Karbhari of the State in whose office Govindrao was serving as Court Reader. The two families developed close friendship. Kirtane's son Vinayak and Mahadeo Ranade became intimate friends.

At the age of 12, Mahadeo was married. The bride was from a family of a high status. His younger sister was married a little earlier. Having taken all the education available at Kolhapur, and it was but little, the question arose whether he should be sent outside, to Poona or to Bombay. As most of the journeys had to be made by road and by bullock-cart, distances in those days were long; Gopikabai could not bear the separation of her only son in his early teens. Govindrao yielded. But she soon died in child-birth. Govindrao, as was usual in those days, married again within a few weeks. The situation thus changed, the question of sending Mahadeo to Bombay for further education was reconsidered. Upon this, Mahadeo was keener than his father. Yet, customary restraints did not permit him to discuss the matter with him. He, therefore, approached his father's friend, Kirtane. Every day he got up early and stood near Kirtane's room; and as soon as Kirtane came out, he asked, "Abasaheb, when will you send us all to Bombay? Please speak to Bhausaheb and send us all to school at Bombay." The elders, however, had to

consider many practical difficulties. They consulted the political agent, Col. Reeves, and other knowledgeable persons about the institution the boys should join. They thought over their lodging and boarding problems. Ultimately, the institution was fixed upon; and it was decided that Mahadeo and four Kirtane boys were to stay together in an independent establishment with a cook and a servant taken from Kolhapur. About the January of 1857, the boys began their studies in the Elphinstone Institution in Bombay.

Education

The Elphinstone Institution owed its existence to the zeal of the astute Governor of Bombay, Mountstuart Elphinstone. He saw that the consolidation of the British Empire required superior administration which, in turn, required trained Indian personnel. Good education, involving familiarity with Western science, literature and history, was thus a necessity for a well-administered empire. Elphinstone, therefore, encouraged the formation of the Native School Book and School Society in 1822 with the object of publishing good books and starting and supervising the right type of schools. The first English school of this society was started in 1824, which developed into the 'Elphinstone Institution' comprising school as well as college classes. Introducing Western learning to Indian students, the Institute became a source of fresh thinking on social,

religious, political and economic matters; and zeal for learning and a liberal outlook became its tradition. The Wood Despatch of 1854 had induced the Government of India to introduce Western education at the highest level; hence, Englishmen who were brought here by the Government as educational officers and teachers were of an exceptionally high calibre.

When Ranade came to join the Institution, its two divisions, the college and the school, had already been separated, and he took admission into Elphinstone High School. After a year he was admitted to the college, which was located in spacious premises. A little later the college was shifted to a still more decent place on spacious grounds with trees and pleasant surroundings. The academic atmosphere too was exquisite, with renowned scholars, mostly British, on its staff. Thus, Ranade had the best possible facilities for higher education— freedom from financial or domestic worries, pleasant physical surroundings, instruction from sound scholars, and an abundant library. Of the many worthy teachers of the college, Sir Alexander Grant made the deepest impression on him. "No one possibly had so good opportunities and equipment to acquire knowledge as I had. Sir Alexander Grant was my master and he gave me excellent guidance," said Ranade once in a personal letter. The students were only a few, revering their teachers and emulating them in scholarly habits. Most of Ranade's fellow-students

attained distinction in later life; for instance, Vinayak Kirtane wrote plays which established a school of drama, and R. G. Bhandarkar attained worldwide fame as an orientalist.

It was in this atmosphere that Ranade's latent capacity for reading, thinking and understanding sprouted. He was no longer the mute mediocre boy of Kolhapur. Principal Kaikhushru Alpaiwala of the Elphinstone School remarked of him, "This is an uncommon lad and he is destined to attain great distinction." He passed all his examinations easily and with credit—the senior scholarship examination in 1861, the B.A. in 1862, the B.A. Honours in 1863, the M.A. in 1864, the L.L.B. in 1865, and the L.L.B. Honours in 1865. He passed the B.A. in the first division. He got a second division in the B.A. Honours; but he was the only candidate to appear, and for his creditable performance he obtained a gold medal and books worth Rs. 200. For the L.L.B. examination, there were only two candidates; both passed in the first division. A few weeks later they appeared for L.L.B. Honours, in which Ranade obtained the first division. Throughout his career Ranade was a scholarship-holder, successively winning scholarships of Rs. 10, 15 and 20. Even before passing the B.A., he was appointed a Dakshina Fellow with a monthly allowance of Rs. 60.

His brilliant success at examinations was but one aspect of the growth of his mind and personality. He had an unsatiable desire for knowledge, and he read far

beyond the immediate requirements of examinations or of teaching work as a Fellow. For instance, he was the only student who attended till the end a Latin language class in order to obtain proficiency in the English language. In order to teach perfectly a certain chapter of Gibbon's *History of the Roman Empire,* he attended classes in Jurisprudence! A list of books Ranade read, besides the prescribed ones, during the three years from 1858 is on record. It includes massive historical works by Macaulay, Gibbon and Buckle, five novels by Scott and two by Bulwar Lytton, philosophical dialogues by Plato, a few poems by Scott and Byron, Milton's *Paradise Lost,* Washington Irving's two books of fiction, selections from *The Spectator*, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations,* and poems by other authors—and yet Ranade said the list was incomplete. Subsequently, for the B.A. examination in 1862 he read 19 books—one of them of four volumes and 25,000 pages and another of 3,000 pages—and for the LL.B. in 1865, 48 books. Voluminous books on history, economics, philosophy, law and on all branches of literature were all grist to his mill. It is no wonder that at one stage he developed acute eye trouble, so that he was advised to confine himself in a dark room for four days.

Among Ranade's contemporaries at the Institution, there were two who have left us their impressions of him. One was Sir Ramakrishna Bhandarkar who was his senior, and the other, Sir Dinshaw Wacha, his

junior. Both testify to his absolute absorption in studies. Bhandarkar says, "We stayed in the same chawl in the Phanaswadi locality. He never wasted his time in gossip with his companions. He never became intimate with anybody, nor did he ever seek introductions. He was absorbed in reading, day and night... He was often seen burning midnight oil in his cabin, buried in reading quite big books like Gibbon's *History of Rome* right till two o'clock at night." Dinshaw Wacha gives quite a graphic description: "I well remember the amount of solid reading he went through in the college library room. Apart from the labour needed to pass the College term and scholarship examinations which to him was child's play, such was his natural talent and power of grasping the meaning of the most difficult text-books that they led him to devote almost the whole day-time of leisure in running through them time after time. None of us could rival his patience, his endurance and avidity for extensive reading... Some of us humorously called him the infant elephant"—his somewhat rugged physique and elephantine stature for an adult of his age appropriately called forth this epithet— simple in his habits, frank by nature, and above all filled with a spirit of shyness which never left him; till the day of his death he was the very idol of his class-fellows. Unconscious of himself, and unsophisticated in urban manners, he would sit on one of the benches with massive legs stretched on the desk opposite, and would, turbanless,

go on reading in a loud voice from noon to the dewy eve. He took no breath and no pause. His reading so absorbed him that he did not know what was passing around him. Dress or food never troubled him."

He was very rarely upset by people. He would then lock himself up in his room for hours. "I fear," he once explained to a friend, "that in my rage I might lose my balance."

He studied a number of subjects, English literature, history, economics, political science, religion and law. In 1860, he was appointed junior Dakshina Fellow; in that capacity he had to study for his own examination and also to teach junior students. He taught mathematics, economics, geography, logic, English poetry and composition. His favourite subjects, however, were history and economics and he had read most extensively in them. He was appointed senior Dakshina Fellow in 1862 and held this post for four years.

Of some interest are the essays which he wrote as a student. As is natural for a youth with academic ambitions, his style was too ornamental at first; but critical remarks by teachers and his own growing maturity removed this drawback altogether by the time he finished his student career.

An extra-curricular activity was the Students' Literary and Scientific Society started in 1848 by students of the Elphinston Institution. Under the auspices of this society, the Dnyanprasarak Sabha was organised 'to

spread knowledge'. Ranade, along with his young fellow-students Kirtane, Gadgil, Parmanand, Wagle, Kunte, Pathak and Modak, joined this Sabha. Before this Sabha Ranade read several papers, which indicated the national problems that stimulated his mind and also the fact that his studies of history and economics were being utilised by him for their solution. In 1859, he read a paper on 'The Duties of the Educated Young Men'; in 1860, on 'Maratha Princes, Jagirdars and Inamdars' (condemning their life of luxury and advising them to take to education); in 1863, on 'Comparison between the Prospects of Progress of the Peoples of Maharashtra and Bengal' (commending the example of the Bengalis); in 1864, on 'The Evil Effects of Overpopulation' (condemning the popular view that in the matter of birth of children we are helpless).

It is during these years at the Elphinstone Institution that Ranade was trained to subordinate his patriotic sentiment to severe logic. In his matriculation examination in 1859 he wrote two essays, one in English entitled 'Rise and Progress of Maratha Power', and the other in Marathi entitled 'Transformations in Hindu Society from Manu's Age Till Today'. The English essay was in high-flown language. He expressed 'the felicity and pleasure' in writing on the rise and progress of his country in earlier times, instead of about later days of its downfall. "Amidst the sickness so deadly, and destruction so complete as now prevails through the

land, a warm and patriotic bosom may prefer to breathe for a time a purer air of more distant ages, when wealth, honour, liberty were the possession of his nation." Ranade argued, against all contemporary books on history, that "Shivaji was forced to rob, for no other plan promised the slightest success under the eagle-like sight and tyranny of Aurangzeb." This much quantum of patriotism was permitted. But the examiner was cut to the quick when Ranade, in his Marathi essay, passed some adverse remarks on British administration. He was punished by the examiner by awarding less marks than were admittedly due to him. The punishment apparently had no effect. For, in a subsequent year, when Ranade was required to compare the Maratha system of administration with that of the British, he repeated the action of criticising the latter. Principal Alexander Grant admonished him and asked him to be more temperate in his expressions; further, he stopped his scholarship for six months. How did Ranade react? His reverence for Sir Alexander was not diminished; for, he continued to speak of him in terms of reverence. Yet, it is evident that he never thought it a sin to criticise the administration of the British, for, he did it later in his public life whenever occasion so required. All that he seems to have learnt from these incidents is the importance of weighing one's words while speaking of the benevolent foreign power. Perhaps he was also persuaded that patriotism itself required recognition of

whatever good was done to the country by the British rule, and utilising the opportunities for progress which it offered.

One can imagine the pride and satisfaction with which Ranade's father Govindrao must have received, from time to time, reports of his brilliant achievements. The members of the family, in particular his teen-aged demure wife, must have been overcome with joy whenever he visited Kolhapur in the vacations. In 1862, after he passed the B.A., he obtained a senior fellowship carrying a scholarship of Rs. 120 per month; it was now possible for him to set up his household in Bombay, where his wife would look after it. She could read and write Marathi, which was the final limit of a woman's education in an orthodox family. Relations between husband and wife, as between father and son, were just in accordance with the custom of the day and described in another connection by Ranade as 'regulated and unequal love'. Ranade always maintained a reverential distance from his father. If he had to ask for anything, he would not go to him personally but would approach him through someone else. If direct talk was unavoidable, he would speak respectfully and in the fewest words. He never sat down in his father's presence, except at meals. Ranade's grandfather Amritrao lived at Pabal, where he visited the latter in 1864.

Though the Elphinstone Institution was relatively older, the Bombay University was established in 1857.

It held its first matriculation examination in 1859, and the other examinations in succeeding years. Ranade was among its first matriculates. (It is interesting to note that only 21 students appeared for the matriculation examination in that year.) From this time onwards he won the first rank in all examinations. He was also among the first B.A.'s, the first M.A.'s, and the first L.L.B.'s of the University. Apart from his brilliant success at examinations, he attained a reputation for his learning, and was spoken of as 'the Prince of Bombay Graduates'. The Principal, in his annual reports of the College, made special mention of him, and that too in highly complimentary terms. Addressing the Director of Education in 1863, Principal Grant said, "I would bring to your notice the remarkable report submitted by Mr. Mahadeo Govind of his work during the past year. This report represents the efforts and achievements of a Hindoo student of superior calibre." Ranade's name was mentioned even in convocation addresses. The first Convocation of the Bombay University was held in 1862; in his Address, Sir Bartle Frere, Governor of Bombay, specially mentioned Ranade as a distinguished *alumnus* of the University. When Ranade passed his L.L.B., he was nominated a fellow of the Senate of the University; felicitating him upon this honour, Sir Bartle Frere in his Convocation Address of 1865 said, "To Mr. Mahadeo Govind Ranade I would offer an especial welcome as the first of what I trust

will be a long and distinguished roll of Fellows... He has well earned the distinction."

Ranade's career as a student and Dakshina Fellow came to an end when he was appointed Marathi Translator in 1866.

Early Official Assignments

'Marathi Translator' was a misleading name for a post which carried, mainly, the duty of reviewing periodically all new publications in Marathi. That the Education Department undertook this function indicates the desire of the Government to promote the production of good literature in the vernacular language. Ranade's appointment to this post was not his first contact with Marathi books; because, after he passed his B.A. in 1862, he was appointed examiner in Marathi for the matriculation examination. For carrying out this responsibility he read quite a good amount of classical Marathi literature. However, his new duties threw him into the midst of it. He was not merely to record or summarise recent publications; he was to make a critical estimate of the merits of each book. To this work he brought to bear all his learning and particularly his study of the principles of literary criticism. As the books were on all kinds of subjects—the only common thing about them was their language—Ranade extended his reading and thinking in several directions in order to do his job.

His reports were meant for the office of the Director of Public Instruction, but the more important of them were published. They were generally exhaustive and scholarly. They enabled the reader to get acquainted with Ranade's line of thinking when he was fresh from the University.

For instance, in his review of a book, *The History of the Bhonslas of Satara,* Ranade shows a middle stage in the change in his ideas about Shivaji. In his matriculation essay in 1859, Ranade reluctantly accepted the current idea that he was a robber, and justified his deeds on the ground that no other course was open to him. In his review of this book, he now holds that in the troublous times in which Shivaji lived, what he did was only a normal thing and no robbery. Later, Ranade was to write *The Rise of the Maratha Power* which established Shivaji as representing patriotism and the moral upheaval of the people.

Reviewing a short history of India, Ranade pointed out that even the writer of a 'short' history ought to have read big and authoritative works on the subject; unless he had a clear and full picture of the past, he would not be able to discriminate between events determined by historic causes and accidental events of no significance.

Reviewing a play *Sairandhri,* Ranade censured it for its poor taste. Reviewing a commentary on Moropant's *Kekavali,* he blamed the commentator for lack of originality. While thus applying Western

literary standards, however, he reproved writers who, in their Marathi novels, depicted English customs and sentiments. He remarked, "Novels and dramas, which are closely fashioned after European types so as to ignore the essential features of native (i.e., Indian) society can never hope for permanent success among the people..." They would be portraying "some corrupt perversion of love's misnomer," not love. In the course of this review, he indulged in some reflections on the subject of love itself. He said, "Pure unadulterated love between man and woman in the first pure blossoming of innocence and health, love which culminates in the still holier bond of marriage, is the exhaustless source of the charm of every literary work of enduring success; because, of all passions of human nature, love alone raises him above himself in noble sacrifices." He preferred this love to that obtaining in Indian society which he described as "regulated and unequal love" yet in Marathi literature, he held, only the Indian variety should be depicted.

It was part of his duty to estimate the extent of progress made in the production of books in Marathi. This was important for the Education Department of the Government. He prepared a catalogue of Marathi books published till 1864. The total number of these books was 661, upon which he commented that the position was "far from satisfactory." "To anyone who looks at it from the stranger's standpoint, our existing literature will appear for the most part either superstitious or

childish." So, even in respect of quality the literature was poor. However, there was progress—Ranade noted that the progress commenced with the establishment of British rule—and from 1818 onwards, the numbers of Marathi books published were, for each succeeding decade, 3, 10, 30, 102, 550.

Ranade worked as Marathi Translator from June 1866 to April 1868. During this period he was also appointed Karbhari or Administrator of Akkalkot State, and later Nyayadhish or Judge at Kolhapur. The books and publications for review were sent to him at those places. His stay at Akkalkot was short, being only for a few months in 1867. His appointment as Administrator in this little State gave him the first experience of actual administration. He was then only a bookish youth of twenty-four; and much was expected of him, because immediately prior to his joining the duties the State had been badly administered by the ruling Chief. It was just on account of maladministration that the State had been placed tinder a Regent by the British Government. Apparently, the scholar acquitted himself well as an administrator also; because he was soon appointed to the higher post of a Judge in the larger State of Kolhapur carrying a handsome salary of Rs. 400 per month.

Ranade, thus, was back at Kolhapur. Ranade's father, Govindrao, in the meanwhile, had risen from the post of Court Reader in the Administrator's Office to that of Private Secretary to the Chief of Kolhapur.

Still, Ranade's earning was much higher. This made no difference in their relations whatsoever. The father was the master of the household; the son was the humble obedient junior; and the bonds of affection were as before delicate yet strong. Each was solicitous regarding the other's feelings.

Once a pungent situation arose. Govindrao had lived in Kolhapur for over twenty years and was in administrative offices. Naturally, he had cordial relations with a fairly large number of friends. Many of them were influential. Sometimes they would have litigation in Ranade's court. If anyone spoke to Govindrao with a view to influencing Ranade, Govindrao rejected the suggestion outright. But one friend from a well-known aristocratic family was very adamant. Moreover, he said he did not want to influence; he merely wanted to get a patient hearing, nothing more. To this Govindrao agreed; for there did not seem to be anything immoral in it. So he took him upstairs to Ranade's study. Ranade got up, and took his seat only after both were seated. Govindrao said, "He has come here to tell you about something. Please hear him." The friend apparently read the coldness in Ranade's expression, and managed to say only, "I have not brought the papers today. May I send for them?" Ranade said, "Today I have a lot of work. When I have some leisure, I shall let you know." When the friend went downstairs, Ranade said to his father, "I have come here on duty. The whole of

Kolhapur knows you and looks upon you as a friend. Anyone could come and urge you to do something for his case. It would be better to avoid this. Otherwise, it might become a constant worry to you and I may have to ask for a transfer. It is a rule with me that I do not hear parties privately or look at their papers at home. I hope you will help me to observe this rule." Such an occasion did not arise again during the remaining four months of his stay in Kolhapur.

There was in those days an advocate's examination without which legal education could not be complete. Only after passing it could one take up all types of cases. Ranade could not appear for this examination while his hands were full with work as Marathi Translator along with the judicial work in the court. Besides, facilities for study were not available at a place like Kolhapur. Ranade, therefore, obtained appointment as acting Professor of English Literature in the Elphinstone College at Bombay. He held this post from 1868 to 1871, in which year he passed the Advocate's Examination.

On passing this examination, Ranade was appointed to act as Magistrate in Bombay. A little later, in November 1871, he was appointed Subordinate Judge at Poona, where he was to spend the major and most fruitful part of his life.

3 DEBUT IN PUBLIC LIFE (1866 TO 1871)

Ranade's public life was an extension of his scholarship. He was but a boy when he joined the Elphinstone Institution in 1857. By the time he passed his B.A. five years later, he had obtained a grasp of all subjects concerning the humanities, philosophy, religion, literature, history and economics. This scholarship gave him the vantage-ground from which he could survey Indian society. From the very start of his education, he showed an inclination to address himself to the problems proximate to him; as has been already noted, the subjects he chose for his papers read before the Dnyanprasarak Sabha were 'The Duties of Educated Young Men' (1859), and 'Maratha Princes, Jagirdars and Inamdars' (1860). He condemned their life of luxury and advised them to take to education. By 1862, he

felt himself competent to assume the editorship of the English section of a newly started Anglo-Marathi daily, the *Indu Prakash.* The journal was started by a group of social reformers; and some members of this group felt the necessity of religious reform too. Though Ranade obtained a release from editorship owing to his other preoccupations, he continued to write for the journal. This was Ranade's first contact with the general public. He was still a student and a fellow of the college; he was yet to appear for the M.A. and the L.L.B.

Social Reform

The social reform movement in India, into which Ranade was drawn through his connection with the journal *Indu Prakash,* had a history. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Hinduism was in a disorganised condition. Highest religious and philosophical ideas, contained in the Vedas, the *Upanishads* and the *Gita*, were overlaid with a mass of superstitions. Religion controlled social customs and behaviour. Although there were many good features in the social system, a large number of pernicious and oppressive customs were blended with it. Good and bad customs alike claimed religious sanctity and moral excellence. In religion, few men showed interest in spiritual development and eternal truths; in the popular mind religion was identified with the observance of rituals, ceremonies, fasts and feasts, and with the rigid maintenance of the social code. The more

obnoxious features of this code were the caste-system, untouchability, child-marriage, enforced celibacy and compulsory asceticism of widows, practice of widows burning themselves on the funeral pyres of their dead husbands, enforced seclusion and ignorance of women, polygamy, ruinous extravagance in celebrating marriages, the dowry system, the elaborate character of rituals and ceremonies, and a ban on foreign travel. The breach of this code was crime as well as sin. The double sanction of social opinion and fear of perdition ruled out any departure from custom. Priests felt themselves called upon to maintain the social order which harboured these evils. Men of a truly religious spirit, the saints, rarely raised their voice against the customs of this world which, after all, did not matter much. Occasional protests of widely respected saints like Eknath Kabir and Tukaram had just been ignored. Attempts of Basava and Chakradhar, founders of the religious sects of Lingayat and Mahanubhava, to abolish caste had only recoiled on their followers and had resulted in the formation of two new castes.

The coming of British rule in the early nineteenth century was vivifying. Since the seventeenth century, rationalism and humanism had transformed European life in all spheres—religion, science, philosophy, politics, economics, law and morality. The British brought with them in India this new spirit and the new ideas which it inspired. The first recipients of these ideas were, of

course, those individuals who came in personal contact with Englishmen. The most outstanding among the earliest of them was Raja Rammohan Roy in Bengal. With an irrepressible thirst for knowledge and an independence of thought and action, he studied Hindu, Christian and Muslim religions. The upshot of his comparative study was that in 1828 he founded the 'Brahmo Samaj', a new reformed sect of Hinduism. In the matter of social customs, the Brahmo Samaj advocated raising the status of women and abolishing caste, untouchability, polygamy and other social evils. His vigorous campaigning against the horrible custom of widow-burning resulted in legislation being passed in 1829, banning this practice. He successfully agitated for establishing institutions imparting Western education in India. In western India, as stated earlier, Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay, was responsible for starting similar institutions. Through them the new outlook of rational thinking and humane feelings spread, both in eastern and western India. The alumni of these institutions were the pioneers of social reform. In western India, Balshastri Jambhekar, in his weekly journal *Darpana*, pleaded for women's education and widow-remarriage. Dadoba Pandurang and Atmaram Pandurang founded a society called the 'Paramahamsa Sabha' in the 'forties—the chief object of which was to fight the caste-system and to support widow-remarriage. Lokahitavadi (Gopal Hari Deshmukh)

started a tirade against all evil customs in Hindu society and wrote a series of one hundred articles in the weekly *Prabhakar*. In 1849, the students of the Elphinstone Institution established a society for discussions; and naturally these discussions centred round social reform. Dadabhai Naoroji, the most prominent of this group, took the initiative in starting schools for Parsi girls, while one school was started for Hindu girls. At Poona, Jyotiba Phule, having imbibed the Western outlook from Christian missionaries, started a school for girls in 1848 and another one for untouchables. Countrywide agitation for legislation permitting widow-remarriage, led by Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, and the passing of such legislation in 1856, focussed attention on the problem of widows. It was at this point of the history of the social reform movement that Ranade was drawn into it.

Two persons were instrumental in bringing Ranade into this movement. One was Gopal Hari Deshmukh, or Lokahitavadi, who has already been mentioned. He was in earnest and had a pungent style. He was in the judicial service. Soon after he was transferred to Bombay in 1861, he launched a newspaper *Indu Prakash* and induced Ranade to be the editor of its English section. The other was Vishnu Parashuram Shastri Pandit. His sensitive heart deeply sympathised with the sufferings of widows. He translated into Marathi Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar's book proving that widow-remarriage

was supported by the Hindu Shastras. He joined Lokahitavadi in conducting his paper and wrote for it every week. On the initiative of these two reformers, in 1865, a society was formed by name 'Vidhava-Vivaha-Uttejaka Mandal', or 'The Society for the Encouragement of Widow-Marriage'. Ranade joined it as a member.

In those days women were a depressed class. Those of rich families enjoyed physical comforts; yet customs heaped miseries on them. They were forbidden to learn the alphabet. They were to spend all their time in manual labour and service in the household. Their husbands could marry and bring in co-wives, but even after the death of their husbands, they must not marry again. Since marriages were performed in childhood, the chances of losing husbands or wives were great. The child-widow had to be severely abstinent. She was to slave for the family and was shunned by all as an inauspicious creature. If she ever succumbed to the temptation of sex, she suffered inhuman punishment. Hence it was that a lot of widows evoked immense sympathies of those whose thinking and feeling were not smothered by the stranglehold of custom.

And yet advocacy of widow-remarriage was an outrage on the public opinion of the day. The contention of the Vidhava-Vivaha-Uttejaka Mandal that widow-remarriage was sanctioned by the Hindu Shastras was immediately challenged. In Maharashtra, on serious disputes regarding interpretation of the Shastras, the

opinion of the revered Shankaracharya of Karvir Math near Kolhapur was regarded as final. His opinion was sought; but he did not give any. The staunch among the orthodox decided to wage war; and they formed a society named 'Hindudharma Vyavasthapak Sabha', or 'The Society to Establish Order in the Hindu Religion'. Vishnushastri Pandit accepted their challenge, and held public discussions on this subject with his opponents at various places. The discussions were indecisive.

The orthodox party was further provoked when Vishnushastri Pandit declared in the paper that a certain lady, a widow, was prepared to remarry, and that persons willing to marry her might contact the sponsors. As a result, her marriage was arranged. The date was announced; and an invitation was issued to the public. The seven signatories to this invitation included Gopal Hari Deshmukh, Vishnushastri Pandit, Mahadeo Govind Ranade and others. The invitation was flung as a challenge.

The orthodox group reacted sharply. They demanded that the marriage must not be performed until the issue whether it was sanctioned by the Shastras was settled in a public discussion. They announced a meeting for this purpose. M. G. Ranade, Vishnushastri Pandit, Wagle and some others went to the meeting. They were ready to argue the case but not to postpone the marriage. The meeting ended in confusion and a scuffle. The orthodox party filed a criminal suit against the reformers, but

it was dismissed. Some members of the party gave threats that they would burn the Induprakash Press and the pandal and that, if Vishnushastri Pandit was still adamant, they would murder him. Their names were reported to the police. And at last, on June 15, 1869, the marriage was celebrated in the well-decorated Wada of one of the reformers and was attended by quite a large number of people.

The orthodox party was incensed. They were determined to punish the reformers with social boycott. For this measure they obtained support, first of the public by addressing a meeting, and then of the Shankaracharya. Then they issued an order to all Hindus that they must cut off all contact with the seven signatories, the married couple, the two brothers of the bride, and all those who had attended the marriage dinner. This order was read at public meetings in various towns, with vehement speeches.

In reply Vishnushastri declared through pamphlets that the boycott order was not valid as he could prove that the Shastras supported the performance of widow-remarriage. For some weeks, learned adversaries put forth their views in separate meetings. Ultimately in 1870, a great debate was held in Poona, in the traditionally approved manner, in the presence of the Shankaracharya. There was a Board of Judges, or Panchas, consisting of nominees of both the parties in equal number. Each point that was raised was discussed

and noted down; the following day the other party would either give its reply in writing, or raise a new point. Learned men from distant places like Banaras and Gwalior had come to witness the debate. The party of reformers was led by Vishnushastri Pandit assisted by J. S. Gadgil, R. G. Bhandarkar and M. G. Ranade. This nine days' debate ended in victory for the orthodox, according to the majority verdict of the judges. The Shankaracharya thereupon delivered his sentence of punishment—the guilty persons must perform a penance or face social ostracism.

Some of the 'guilty' performed penance forthwith. Some resisted for a time. Only three persons refused to yield till the end—Vishnushastri Pandit, M. G. Ranade and V. P. Ranade. V. P. Ranade passed away, Vishnushastri himself married a widow, and M. G. Ranade engaged himself in propaganda in this cause.

In a letter to Sir William Hunter written long after Ranade narrated his experiences of this boycott: My younger sister who used to stay with me in Bombay was called away by her in-laws and they prevented us from meeting each other. Occasionally she used to visit me stealthily. My Brahman servants left me. If I engaged a new servant, for fear of being himself boycotted, he too left my service. We ceased to be invited to social functions. If our women went anywhere, they were insulted... If there was a death in the family, it was difficult to get men for the funeral. . . The marriages of members of my

family which were settled before the commencement of the boycott were now cancelled. But we continued on our path; we brought about more widow-marriages." In the course of a few years, the boycott gradually wore off.

During this period of boycott, from 1865 to 1873, Ranade entered into correspondence with reformers in all provinces with a view to establish links among all of them. He also made a further study of the Vedas, the Smritis, the Puranas and of history to examine the question of Shastric support to widow-remarriage. And he wrote a comprehensive essay, based on this study, on the subject.

Religious Reform

The step from social to religious reform was almost unavoidable. In the India of the early nineteenth century, the idea that social customs were part and parcel of religion was so ingrained in the popular mind that one could not propose social reform without calling it religious reform also. Christian missionaries, who were converting people in large numbers, were ever alert in exposing weaknesses in the Hindu religion; and it had to be rendered defendable. This situation provoked a deep and comparative study of all religions. Moreover, the same spirit of rationalism which prompted the intellectuals to reform society also impelled them to reformulate their ideas on religion. Hence it was that many social reformers were religious reformers as well.

The history of the movement of religious reform ran parallel to that of social reform. The originator of this movement also was Raja Rammohan Roy. He was the first Indian to carry rational enquiry into the realm of religion. He founded a religious society named the Brahmo Samaj in 1828. In western India, Dadoba Pandurang started the Manava-dharma Sabha in 1844, which later was changed, in 1849, to the Paramahamsa Sabha. Lokahitavadi, who was bitterly attacking social evils just about this time, advocated a simple reformed religion. Men who put forth these ideas of religious reform were deeply impressed by two elements of thought which had come from the West, namely, rationalism of European enlightenment and love and compassion for men stressed in the Christian religion. They wanted to eliminate from Hinduism everything that was contrary to reason and compassion. Hence, all these reformist proposals had some common features. In contrast to many gods of current Hinduism, they preached that God was one; in contrast to the worship of idols, they preached contemplation and quiet prayer, addressed to God, the Author and Preserver of the universe. They reduced religious ceremonies to the minimum. They abjured faith in any scripture as authority, and they dismissed the idea of *Avatars*. They condemned evil religio-social customs on the ground that God the Embodiment of Love must disapprove of them. They emphasised good deeds instead of rituals.

At the same time, there were minor differences. The Brahmo Samaj in Bengal was founded by Rammohan Roy on the basis of a study of Hinduism as well as of Islam and Christianity; and the wisdom of the *Upanishads,* to which no exception could be taken from the new standpoint, was the philosophic background of the Samaj. The Paramahamsa Sabha paid scant attention to Hindu religious philosophy and was captivated by two elements of Christianity, compassion for men and surrender to God. The Brahmo Samaj in Bengal preached its doctrines with zeal and courage, while members of the Paramahamsa Sabha were so fearful of opposition that they decided to keep the very existence of the Sabha a secret until its loyal adherents increased to a sufficient number. The secret leaked out prematurely and the Sabha was dissolved.

Even the idea of forming an association of like-minded men, though secretly, came to these men only when the social reformist leader, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, who had intimate relations with the Brahmo Samaj, visited Bombay in the course of his own mission. His learning, eloquence and earnestness greatly impressed Ram Balkrishna Jayakar who, with his friends like Dadoba Pandurang and Dr. Atmaram Pandurang, started the Paramahamsa Sabha. It was dissolved, under the circumstances already stated, in 1860; however, a few of the members continued to cherish its ideas. In 1864, the great leader and powerful preacher of the Brahmo

Samaj, Keshabchandra Sen, visited Bombay and stimulated interest afresh in religious reform. A few former members of the Paramahamsa Sabha decided to revive their society on a sounder basis and under a new name. They gathered about them a few young people to whom the idea of religious reform had a strong appeal. Some of these young men were Ranade's contemporaries at college and his intimate friends, such as Bal Mangesh Wagle and Narayan Mahadeo Paramanand. They all discussed basic principles and, ultimately on the model of the Brahmo Samaj, founded the religious cult, the Prarthana Samaj, in 1867.

The main principles of the Prarthana Samaj were: God is one and without form. Our duty is to worship Him with our mind; image-worship is a wrong way of worship. God is the Creator. We owe it to Him that we perform good deeds; for such wrongs as, in our weakness, we may have done we should seek His pardon. Weekly congregational prayer, or 'Prarthana', contemplating Him and seeking His blessings was the distinctive feature of the Samaj.

When the Prarthana Samaj was founded, Ranade was not in Bombay, he was at Kolhapur as a judge. Bhandarkar too was away. But both of them were transferred to the Elphinstone College, Bombay, as acting Professors in 1868. They then joined the Samaj and strengthened it, bringing to it their piety and their erudition.

Ranade's religious upbringing as a boy at Kolhapur was typically orthodox, as in a normal Brahmin household. *Sandhya* and recital of the *Purushasukta* were part of his rigidly followed daily routine. After he entered the Elphinstone Institution his religious beliefs must have gradually appeared to him different from those of Christianity and opposed to Western philosophy. His studies at college added nothing to his knowledge of Hindu culture but a vast amount to that of Western learning. He confessed this in an examination answer: "I know very little of Brahmanical schools, either their method or their scope." On the other hand, Ranade was very favourably impressed by a book on Christian religious philosophy, Butler's *Analogy*. Butler represented a line of thinkers who attempted to base Christianity on Reason and yet gave Faith its due place. In the course of his studies in college, Ranade may have concluded that Hinduism too required a similar scrutiny of Reason. When, therefore, the Prarthana Samaj was founded in 1867 with this very object, it was but natural that Ranade should join it and work for it with enthusiasm.

The theoretical position of the Prarthana Samaj, its members felt, was not sufficiently clear and comprehensive. To meet this difficulty, Ranade undertook the task of giving a clear exposition of their stand. He wrote a long article in 1872, entitled 'A Theist's Confession of Faith', published in *The Hindu*

Reformer. Bhandarkar also wrote an extensive essay on 'The Knowledge of God'.

There are two outstanding characteristics to be found in Ranade's 'A Theist's Confession of Faith'. In the first place, it is an attempt to harmonise all religions with which Indians had become familiar. He saw that there was arising in his time, as a result of the religious speculation spread over the ages, a set of doctrines called Theism; these were "surging up to the surface in all quarters of the world," in Europe and America. He regarded the Brahmo Samaj and the Prarthana Samaj as only a part of this world movement. His essay was only a statement of the position of pure Theism on some important questions in religious speculation. (The essential idea of Theism, says an encyclopaedia of religion, is that of a unitary, personal being as the creative source or ground of the physical world, man and value, at once transcendent to nature (i.e., distinct from it and never exhausted by it) and immanent in it (i.e., natural processes involving the continuing divine activity). Theism, is this philosophical position not to be identified with any religion; Christianity and Hinduism are capable of being interpreted in the Theistic way. In the second place, the essay is an attempt to harmonise reason with faith. He says there are some problems which men cannot understand at all, such as the origin of the world, and the relation between God and matter. There are some problems about which certainty of knowledge

is not absolute, but the degree of certainty is very high and it is proper that we should treat the knowledge as true. For instance, a man with a Theistic conviction feels no doubt that God shapes and regulates nature by His providence, as is evidenced by skilful design and kind disposition exhibited in nature; his evidence is not complete, but sufficient. Similarly, we can hold with enough logical proof that men are sufficiently free under God's government so that they can be morally held responsible for their actions; here the proof is not absolute, but sufficient. The faculty by which we attain this practical conviction of such truths is termed by Ranade as 'Faith'. Lastly, there are some problems about which man can have knowledge of absolute certainty through Reason and by examining evidence to convince himself completely. Faith, as defined by Ranade, is an instrument for attaining knowledge which is beyond the power of Reason; it is thus complementary and not opposed to Reason. This exposition by Ranade must have greatly helped religious reformers under the influence of Western rationalism to decide what in Hinduism deserved to be rejected and what was to be retained. Apparently, that for which logical proof is not sufficient cannot be accepted on faith.

From this standpoint, Ranade, in his 'A Theist's Confession of Faith', states the Prarthana Samaj position on thirty-nine questions. There is a religious or spiritual element in human nature. It has two aspects – intellectual

or speculative and practical. From the speculative element springs love of God, and from the practical element, love of man. Love of God and love of man are inseparable, as they spring from two aspects of the same element, namely, the religious consciousness. God is a living being or spirit, the one Supreme Being, Cause of all causes, unconditioned by time or space, Supreme Ruler of the universe which is governed by His providence, pre-eminent in power, wisdom, goodness, love, justice and holiness: Lord, Father, Judge, and moral Governor of all human souls. The human soul is a spirit, that is, a being by itself and is not a form of matter or an activity of matter (as held by some scientific philosophers). The soul is immortal and lives after death, which separates it from the body. God's will governs and regulates inanimate and unconscious matter as well as voluntary and self-conscious spirits by a scheme of providence. Salvation is attained by faith, devotion, prayer and submission to God's will, by the love of man and love of God, and by the practice of virtue and piety. The nature of salvation is this: when the human soul, tried and purified by self-control and an attitude of resignation, acquires habits which enable it to escape its lusts, and to enter into an intimate relation with God and realise vividly the blessings of God's presence and holiness, this consummation of the soul is salvation. Thus, salvation can be attained by the human soul on leaving the body or even while residing in the body.

These are the chief ideas which Ranade stated in 'A Theist's Confession'. Though he was spiritually inclined, he is not known to have expressed any special interest in religion until he joined and became an active member of the Prarthana Samaj. The Samaj gave a new direction to his thinking, and a new dimension to his personality. Religion came to pervade his life. Together with Bhandarkar, he soon became the theoretician of the Prarthana Samaj. Weekly prayer-meetings of the Samaj fixed Ranade's mind on spiritual problems. Indeed religion became the basis of his thoughts, words and deeds.

Not long after the publication of 'A Theist's Confession' Ranade suffered bereavement in the death of his wife. They were married when Ranade was about twelve or thirteen, and almost after the event they were separated when Ranade went to Bombay for higher education. She joined him in Bombay in 1862 and for nine years they were constant companions. She was close to him while he was winning academic honours and was fighting the battle of social reform. In 1871, when Ranade shifted to Poona, she began to run temperature. The illness developed into consumption. Ranade was full of tenderness. After the full day's work at the law court, he would return to her sick bed, attending on her night and day, giving her medicines hour after hour. She passed away in October 1873. For a full year after her death, Ranade "hardly spent a night without tears coming

up in his eyes. He would spend an hour after dinner listening to a recital of the *abhangas* of Tukaram. When an *abhanga* was poignant or sorrowful, he would ask for it to be repeated over and over again. Then grief used to overwhelm him." He found consolation in religion. Years later, writing a condolence letter to an intimate friend similarly bereaved, he said, "My own loss has been equally bitter and at times these mishaps so puzzle one's understanding that the most devout are tempted into sinful despondency and disloyal rebellion. You are, however, too strongly grounded in virtue and piety to be shaken in your faith permanently, whatever be the temporary shock you suffered... The heart, saddened by its loss, finds out the truth that the world is not intended to be a bower of roses."

4 DEVOTED SON AND ASSIDUOUS CITIZEN (1871 TO 1878)

Father and Son

The Premature Death of Ranade's wife in 1873 did not only plunge him in immense grief. Events quickly followed which raised for him, within a couple of weeks, a practical problem of the first magnitude.

It is not known if, during the five years while Ranade was emerging as a prominent young leader of the movement for widow-remarriage, he ever had an exchange of views on this question with his father, Govindrao. Presumably he had not; because it was regarded as bad manners to discuss things with one's father, and it was not the practice of fathers to encourage discussions. We learn from a letter of Ranade's years later that during the period of social boycott in 1871, when his father came to stay with him, he refrained from

dining in company with him, and that he did so "lest the father too might be persecuted for having contact with him." Apparently, the father had not told Ranade that by conviction he too was against the reform, and that he himself wanted to avoid 'contact' with Ranade. Ranade's decision to dine sitting at a distance suited him for quite a different reason.

On learning of the demise of his daughter-in-law, Govindrao immediately went from Kolhapur to Poona to share Ranade's sorrow. But soon another anxiety overtook him. He came to know that some letters from Ranade's friends urged him to marry a widow. Will Ranade do this? That would be abominable. The evil influence of Ranade's 'social reformer' friends must be warded off; and before they could get a chance to induce him, he must be compelled to marry in the conventional way. Govindrao was horrified at the prospect of the disgrace that would be brought to the family if Ranade put his views into action and married a widow. Exercising his paternal authority, Govindrao acted promptly and decisively. He took charge of all the letters and telegrams received by post and kept back the ones which were despatched from Bombay, so that Ranade never saw them. He began to entertain offers for Ranade's second marriage. He actually sent the family priest and protégé, Balambhatji, to accompany a gentleman to his house in Satara district and interview his daughter there. And he broached to his son the topic

of a second marriage. Ranade was not at all in a mood to remarry. He put forth several arguments to induce his father to let him alone. "I am not young any more," he said. "I am thirty years old. I can certainly lead a life of thought and retirement. Durga (Ranade's sister) is younger than I and has been a widow since she was twenty-one, yet you do not even think of suggesting such a thing to her, even though you love her equally. In the same way, do not press me to marry; if a life of restraint is good for her, so it is for me too. If you have fears about my marrying a widow, I give you my word of honour that I will not do so." All these arguments were of no avail. The father was absolutely firm. Then, at last, Ranade said, "It is sad that you are not open to persuasion. I must obey you, as a matter of duty."

A couple of days later the party from Satara arrived. Govindrao saw the girl and approved. Then he asked the girl's father, Annasaheb Kurlekar, to see Ranade himself. In that interview Ranade argued that the match was against the interests of the girl. "You belong to an ancient jagirdar family; I am a derided reformer in favour of widow-remarriage. I have weak eyesight and am also hard of hearing. I am planning to go to England and after I return I shall not undergo penance. You should consider the consequences of all this." The girl's father still persisted with his proposal. Ranade then agreed, but asked for one year's time before the wedding was performed. This point was left to be decided by Govindrao.

When Ranade talked to his father about this, he found him firm on this point too. "If you were left free for a year or six months, I shall lose all my peace of mind in this declining age. I have seen all the letters your friends in Bombay have sent you. You are already strongly inclined towards these new ideas, and your friends are encouraging you. If you are left free, you will be naturally driven towards these new-fangled ideas. I am old, and you are stepping into the position of the master of the family. The women and children depend upon you. You may do just what you think right. But I tell you what I have decided. If you do not marry the girl now, it will be derogatory to the family of Annasaheb and it will be highly insulting to me too; hence I shall leave for Kolhapur for good. Our bonds as father and son will be broken for ever." Ranade yielded. Thus, within a month of the death of his first wife, Ranade was married again, against his will, and against the principles which he had preached and suffered for. The girl was too young, the difference in their age was large (she was eleven and he thirty-two), and the bridegroom of an advanced age had not sought a widow for a bride. For Ranade, the day of this marriage was a day of agony. After the Vedic ceremony he walked home, spoke to no one, went to his room, and locked himself in.

Comrades in social reform work accused him of cowardice and treachery. Champions of orthodoxy jeered and sneered at him. Ranade alone had to bear the

fury of some and the ridicule of others. Subsequently admirers often made attempts to justify this action: Devotion to father is a great and rare virtue. Ranade was indebted to his father for his education, which made him all he was, and disobedience would have amounted to ingratitude. Had he married a widow, that step would have severed all his connection with the family, for the well-being of which, after his father, he was to bear the responsibility. The social reform principles did not lay a compulsory obligation on anyone to marry a widow. Granted the truth in all these arguments, however, it is difficult to see how social reform can be achieved if such considerations are held supreme by all reformers.

Father and son were held together by bonds of intense affection and trust. But the father was pained at the heterodox views of his son, and the son felt helpless against the father's obduracy over matters of social reform. The father allowed the son the fullest public expression of what he thought, but when it came to the practice of social reform in the family, he opposed it with all his might. Once the father had come to Poona. During his stay one day, Ranade invited his reformist friend who had married a widow to dinner in the evening. The friend was none other than Vishnushastri Pandit, the founder of the Widow Marriage Society under whose captaincy Ranade worked in this movement. Govindrao, on coming to know of this invitation, avoided to see the face of the guest, and ordered the servant to prepare for

his journey back to Kolhapur. This indignant decision was conveyed to Ranade by his sister. Ranade was restless throughout the night. Early in the morning he went and stood respectfully before the father. The father saw him but paid no heed. For an hour neither of them spoke. Then Ranade apologised for what he did. The father was still not appeased, and was bent on returning to Kolhapur. Ranade said, "So the harsh decision stands. I am an orphan. Indeed, I was orphaned the day my mother died." Ranade rushed upstairs and sent word to his father that if he did not give up the idea of returning to Kolhapur, Ranade would resign his Government post, which then held no charm for him. Only then was the father pacified.

Govindrao, though earning a decent salary, always incurred debts because he was rather extravagant and was too generous to relations and friends. Ranade, earning more, used to repay these debts. When Govindrao retired, Ranade sent him about one-fifth of his own salary every month. In 1875, Ranade purchased a house in Poona in the name of the father, even against the latter's wish. A few months after Govindrao returned to Kolhapur, he developed diabetes. The disease got aggravated and his condition became serious. Ranade took leave to be near him. When Ranade was about to leave him for a week or so to join duties at Poona and return, the father called him to his bedside, held his hand and, with tears in his eyes, said, "Madhaorao, if

you do not return soon, we may not meet. I know you will look after everything well. But you realise, don't you, that the burden I bore throughout my life will now be yours?" Ranade replied, "Please do not worry. I shall never fail in my duty." The father could not suppress his sobs. At Poona, before Ranade could get more leave sanctioned, he got a telegram from Kolhapur that his father had passed away.

Concern for the Country

Although, before coming to Poona, Ranade had written and spoken on a variety of subjects, he had been addressing himself mainly to social and religious matters. On coming to Poona, he continued his interest in them—he wrote 'A Theist's Confession of Faith' a year after his arrival here—but his main interests now were political and economic matters. He remained in Poona from 1871 to 1878 and again from 1881 to 1893. During the first of these periods, Ranade brought into existence in western India public opinion on matters of public concern.

For this undertaking his own official position was both an asset and a hindrance. At the comparatively early age of thirty, he was given a post, as first-class first-grade Subordinate Judge, carrying a salary of eight hundred rupees. Sometime before 1872 he had received the title of Rao Bahadur. The high official position, enabled him to get a respectful hearing from all with

whom he came into contact. On the other hand, his position as a Government servant put certain restraints on him, so that he had to express his frank views about administration from behind some screen—either as views of some organisation or of some journal. The organisation was found; the journal was founded.

There existed in Poona an association called the Sarvajanik Sabha, started by a few people in 1870 with the broad object of discussing all matters of public interest. Ranade decided to convert this inactive association into a useful organisation of public work in the field of economic and political regeneration. In this plan, Ranade found an enthusiastic collaborator in Ganesh Wasudeo Joshi, popularly known as 'Sarvajanik Kaka', meaning 'public uncle'. A self-made man, G. W. Joshi was a skilful and prosperous lawyer with a very strong urge for public service. He utilised every minute of his day. He was fearless and spirited, and full of mental and physical vigour. After Ranade came to Poona, 'Kaka' Joshi and he met often and a close friendship developed between them. Besides the Sarvajanik Sabha, 'Kaka' Joshi had organised an association for the promotion of commerce, called the Poona Vyaparottejak Mandali.

Under the auspices of this Mandali, Ranade gave two lectures on the subject of India's foreign trade. The subject was of topical interest because, owing to the rapid growth of communications in the decade

1850 to 1860, the volume of India's foreign trade had increased greatly. Ranade's lectures put forth his own interpretation of the figures published by the Government. Except Dadabhai Naoroji, no Indian had till then made a similar systematic study of India's economic conditions. Ranade noted the drain of India's wealth on account of certain items in the balance of payments, such as 'home charges', remittances to England by English officials, profits of English banks; but did not put so much emphasis on it as Dadabhai had done. Ranade's chief worry was the fact that India's exports largely consisted of raw materials, while the imports consisted mainly of finished goods. Men in India worked hard and yet remained poor. The remedy, in Ranade's opinion, was that Indians should start production of machine-made goods, i.e., manufacturing industries. This involved the problem of raising capital. For this, Ranade urged people to change their habits, give up their craze for ornaments, sell gold and invest the proceeds in industries. They should economise on other luxuries too, and increase their savings which they should make available for investment in manufactures. He commended the example of the Frenchmen who, after their defeat by Germany, met a similar situation in this way. Ranade also advocated protection to Indian manufactures for some time.

Ranade undertook another study of Indian economics. A Parliamentary Committee was appointed

in 1871 to consider financial organisation in India. The evidence before this committee threw light on much of the obscure region of the system of taxation in India. Ranade wrote a series of articles in the *Indu Prakash,* giving a summary of the evidence as published from time to time. The committee worked for four years and the published proceedings ran into 3,500 pages. For his masterly summary, Ranade received compliments from numerous quarters, including the influential London paper, *The Saturday Review.*

But Ranade's chief contribution to public life was from behind the Sarvajanik Sabha. The Sabha's members were men of status, and Ranade infused in them a spirit of public service. In 1872, he induced the Sabha to undertake an economic survey of various districts in Maharashtra. For the first time, information of this kind was obtained independently of the Government. This had two advantages; in the first place, a group of voluntary investigators was formed among non-official citizens, and, in the second, the report of investigation did not cover up the faults of administration, as usually happened in the case of Government reports. In 1874, the Sabha touched a political question. It prepared, and sent to the British Parliament and newspapers, a memorandum advocating some form of responsible government for India. It desired that the British Parliament should include representatives from India also who should be consulted on questions concerning

India. The electorate for these representatives should consist of taxpayers paying at least Rs. 50 a year. By publicising this memorandum, the Sabha helped to create political-mindedness which later grew into the universal urge for political emancipation.

A year later, in 1875, the Sabha intervened in the politics between the British Indian Government and the rulers of Indian States. Malharrao Gaikwad of Baroda was dethroned, arrested and prosecuted. The procedure by which he was being dealt with was high-handed and was creating a bad precedent. 'Sarvajanik Kaka' offered by wire, on behalf of Poona, a contribution of one lakh rupees for the defence of the prince. The Sabha convened a public meeting, which was attended by three thousand people and passed a resolution supporting the memorial prepared by the Sabha. It was drafted by Ranade. It was addressed to the Viceroy. Distinguishing between a State and its ruler, the memorandum says, "It will not be just to punish them (subjects) for the errors or vices of their chiefs," implying thereby that Malharrao's misgovernment should not be made an excuse for annexing Baroda State. It requested that the prince should be tried by a mixed bench of Indian and British judges and not one consisting of British judges alone, and that it should be assisted by a commission consisting of some of the other princes. The former of these desires was conceded. Yet, even though the judges were not unanimous about the charge of poisoning the

Resident, he was treated as guilty and was deported to South India. The almighty Government did not like this meddling by a public association, and it came to feel that Ranade was a man to be watched.

In 1875, there broke out agrarian riots in Ahmednagar and Sholapur districts, in which the victims of loot and arson were 'Sowkars' or moneylenders. Generally, the demand was that the debt-bonds must be returned. The official view was that the notorious greed and cunning of moneylenders were the only cause of these riots. After the riots were put down, Ranade drafted a memorial for the Sarvajanik Sabha on this occurrence. He admitted that moneylenders may be cheating and robbing the farmers, but argued that it was the Government's policy of exacting too much land revenue which drove the farmers to moneylenders for finance. He pointed out that anti-moneylender riots occurred only in those districts where the revenue burden was especially heavy. The remedy then lay not only in curbing the moneylenders but also in lightening the burden of land revenue. The Government did not relish this true analysis.

In 1876, the British Parliament passed an act conferring upon the Queen of England the title, 'Empress of India'. A Durbar was to be held in Delhi in January 1877 to proclaim the new title, and it was expected that the princes and people from all parts of the country should pay their homage and pledge their loyalty. Ranade prepared a draft of an address to be presented on behalf

of the Sarvajanik Sabha to the Queen's representative in Delhi. He conceived the idea that people, while pledging their loyalty, should also express their grievances and expectations. In the course of this very tactfully worded address, Ranade prayed that the Queen might be pleased to grant a boon. The boon prayed for was this: An Assembly of Indian princes should be constituted, which should be consulted by the Government in certain matters of administration such as misgovernment by a particular ruler, questions of adoption by rulers, etc. Highest offices should be thrown open to Indians. Some representatives of India should find a place in the British Parliament in order to express the Indian people's view-point on measures which concerned them. "On this solemn occasion of the assumption of the title of the 'Empress', we implore you to confer upon Indians political and social status equal to that of the British citizens, and grant to them rights of responsible government." This address was sent by the Sabha to Delhi with 'Sarvajanik Kaka' G. W. Joshi and presented to the representative of the Queen-Empress.

About the same time that the Durbar was being held in Delhi, there was famine of unprecedented severity in several districts in Maharashtra. At Ranade's suggestion, the Sarvajanik Sabha sent its agents and correspondents to several districts and through them ascertained the conditions of the people, their cattle, crops, migration to neighbouring districts, rainfall,

and so on. On the basis of this first-hand information, Ranade prepared the Sabha's memorials which were sent to the Government. In them the Sabha, while complimenting the Government and its officials on their good work, pointed out faults too. Ranade, through these memorials, said that the administration was wrong in certain assumptions which led it to be very harsh in its treatment of the famine-stricken people. The population affected was not 5 to 10 per cent but 50 to 60 per cent; decrease of population through emigration or death was not 4 per cent but 25 to 35 per cent; the wage-rate of one pound of corn was most inadequate to prevent disease, and death. One of the causes of the famine was the recent enhancements of revenue assessments, and the hard rigidity with which the revenue was collected. Ranade, by inducing the Sarvajanik Sabha to undertake famine work of this kind, achieved two results. One, he exposed certain defects of administration arising out of inadequate sympathy for the people—this attitude was inevitable in a foreign government. Two, he aroused in a number of educated men—members of the Sabha, its agents and correspondents in districts, readers of its published memoranda—an active interest in the fortunes or misfortunes of their countrymen. For centuries past this country had lived under absolute monarchy; and Ranade introduced into it an element then found only in the Western countries, namely, public thinking on public questions.

During the first period of Ranade's life in Poona from 1871 to 1878, although the chief field of his activities was politics and economics, he continued his interest in religious and social reform. As has been already said, it was in Poona that in 1872 he wrote 'A Theist's Confession of Faith'. In his activities in the religio-social field, an interesting incident occurred in 1874. Swami Dayanand, the champion of the pure Vedic dharma rid of its later unwholesome accretions, had come into contact with the Brahmo Samaj leaders in Calcutta in 1872. He was learned in all scriptures and a very eloquent and effective orator. Though there were points of contrast between the Brahmo Samaj and the Prarthana Samaj on the one hand and Dayanand on the other, they were all agreed on the urgency of social reforms. He came to Bombay in 1874 and, with a view to advancing the cause of social reform, Ranade and others invited him to Poona. Swamiji's lectures in Poona enchanted the audience which grew larger day by day. The social conservatives determined to counteract his growing popularity and influence. A few days before the end of the lecture series, Swamiji's admirers met at Ranade's house and decided that a procession should be taken out in his honour. The orthodox opponents planned to counteract this glorification by organising another procession of such a type as would humiliate Swamiji; it was a procession of a donkey dressed in coloured clothes accompanied by noise-makers. Swamiji's

procession, with he himself seated on an elephant, was about to start when the rival procession reached the place. People of the orthodox group began to shout and use foul language. When they saw that the reformers were unperturbed and that the procession continued solemnly, they collected wet mud on the streets and threw it on the processionists. Still the reformers walked on, paying no heed. Anticipating all this trouble, earlier in the day some persons suggested that the procession might be cancelled. But Ranade said, "We must have the procession. We will be able to find out as to how many brave men in Poona are prepared to defend the banner of social reform. No reform has ever succeeded without passing through the fire of persecution. I am ready to bear suffering silently without murmur, even if the dirt from the gutters and stones are showered on us." Dirt from the streets *was* showered, and Ranade had a good share of it on his person. "Why not," he said, "when I was with them all?"

5 CRITICISING BRITISH ADMINISTRATION (1878 TO 1881)

Displeasure of Government

All the reports and memorials of the Sarvajanik Sabha on economic and political conditions and problems were well-informed, well-reasoned and weighty. The sole motive behind them was public good; the role played by the administration was examined by this single test. The general benefits of British rule were acknowledged and loyalty was freely expressed; but wherever the administration was found wanting, the inadequacy was pointed out with candour. Even this bit of criticism was not tolerated by the imperialistic rulers of the time. Moreover, that the Indians through their associations and journals should begin to think on politics was itself regarded as impertinent. Policy-making was the privilege of the rulers; it was none of the business of

Indians. The activities of the Sarvajanik Sabha, therefore, became increasingly distasteful to the Government; and Anglo-Indian opinion was greatly offended. *The Times of India* of Bombay regarded the Sabha as "a seditious, if not a secret, society." Englishmen began to suspect that the motive behind its criticism was to oppose British rule. It was an open secret that Ranade was the real author of all its reports and memorials, and that it was he who inspired and guided its activities. The Government, therefore, decided to remove Ranade from Poona and sever his contact with the Sabha. He was transferred to Nasik, a less important place. The Governor of Bombay, Sir Richard Temple, meant this as a blow to the public of Poona.

Before he was transferred and while the Sabha was under suspicion, the Government sent a detective to probe into the activities of the Sabha. The detective pretended to be a traveller wanting to cultivate acquaintance with learned and cultured men of different places. He was very hospitable to visitors, entertaining them quite generously. Visitors were highly impressed by his wide reading, intelligence, jovial spirit and musical talents. He became popular and several of Ranade's friends were quite enamoured of him. Ranade, however, was not taken in. To his friends, he said, "But where is he from? What is his profession? Have a look at his mail tomorrow morning." After a couple of days, Sitarampant Chiplunkar, the Secretary of the Sarvajanik

Sabha, reported, "He does not get his letters from the postman; he goes out for a walk early in the morning and reaches the General Post Office. Yesterday I followed him and found a cover of a letter opened by him. The post mark on it is of Simla. Besides, a friend of mine who works in the Post Office told me that many of this man's letters are addressed to the Secretary to the Government at Calcutta." Needless to say, after this exposure the number of his visitors immediately dwindled, and he left the city.

Ranade went to Nasik in January 1878. He took leave and returned to Poona in February to attend to some domestic affairs. There he had a severe attack of typhoid. His condition became critical. Chances of his recovery seemed few. Ranade was serene, contemplating on God. At his desire a learned Brahmin was constantly reciting 'Vishnusahasranama' or 'a thousand names of Vishnu', which brings before the mind a thousand aspects of the One Supreme Being. Fortunately Ranade recovered from this illness, to the immense relief of the family. After his father's demise, the Kolhapur household was broken up and all came to Poona—Ranade's step-mother, her mother, a widowed sister, an aunt, and two step-brothers. When Ranade recovered, he went to Nasik only with his wife Ramabai and one school-going brother, leaving the elderly ladies behind.

As a judge, Ranade's work was thorough. Mr. Mankar, who worked with him as a subordinate

judge to assist him, and who knew him for more than two decades, says, "His judgements, remarkable for patient and minute enquiry, exhaustive treatment of every case that came before him, careful examination of every document filed in it, lucid statements of facts, just appreciation of evidence, elaborate exposition of the various bearings of the question at issue, and cogency of arguments adduced in support of decisions finally arrived at, often won the admiration of the High Court." This involved, of course, doing much of the judicial work at home. It was in addition to this solid hard work that he undertook public activities and carried them out with equal thoroughness. These activities continued even after his transfer to Nasik. His concern for the growth of Marathi literature, which was evident in his reports when he was Marathi Translator, led him to start an association for giving encouragement to the writing of books in Marathi. It was named Marathi Granthottejak Mandali; and it was to undertake publication of selected books. In May, at Ranade's suggestion, a writers' conference was held, which was the first of its kind.

From the year 1878 the relations between educated Indians and the British Government in India began to be strained. The regime, since 1876, of Disraeli as Prime Minister of England, Lord Salisbury as Secretary of State for India and Lord Lytton as Viceroy of India was imperialistic, being aggressive against the neighbouring countries as well as against the conquered

people. Offended by a series of Government measures expressing this spirit, the public no longer hesitated to point out faults of administration. In particular, the vernacular journals in Bengal were highly critical. Lord Lytton, alarmed at the extreme nature of the criticism of the Press, began to consider legislation to suppress it. Ranade's colleague 'Sarvajanik Kaka' G. W. Joshi organised an All India Newspaper Editors' Conference at Calcutta, again probably the first of its kind. Lord Lytton obtained sanction of the Secretary of State by wire, and then passed the bill hurriedly in a single sitting of the Legislative Council. This was the Vernacular Press Act of 1878. It empowered a magistrate to require from a printer or a publisher to deposit security, or to furnish a bond binding himself not to print anti-Government matter; and in the event of publication of such matter, the Government was given the power to confiscate the plant and the deposit. The Act aroused a storm of opposition, and a nationwide agitation, in which Surendranath Banerjee played a leading role, was organised. Ranade had come to Poona for the vacation; and a public meeting was held in Poona to protest against the Act. In that meeting a memorial to be sent to the Viceroy on this subject was approved; this memorial was drafted by Ranade.

At Nasik, Ranade continued public work of the same kind as he did at Poona. He started a library, opened a branch of the Prarthana Samaj, and took interest

in girls' schools. At this time Gopal Hari Deshmukh (Lokahitawadi) was a joint judge at Nasik, and the two old friends once again worked together for social reform. Ranade delivered a lecture on 'Knowledge in the English Language'; in it he complained that ancient culture did not train us in the understanding of our duties and rights, which Western culture does. For instance, the story in the *Ramayana* that Rama punished a Shudra for doing *tapa* or spiritual penance, because a Shudra has no right to do so, shows an entirely false conception of rights. Even in the period of its highest glory which the *Ramayana* depicted, our nation was in the stage of infancy. Our most learned pandits as well as common people hold that howsoever tyrannical a king may be, to speak anything against him is sin. Knowledge contained in English literature gives us the right conception. It is significant that Ranade should make this point. His grievance against ancient Indian culture, rightly or wrongly, was that it produced a slavish mentality.

Ranade had long been wishing that the Sarvajanik Sabha should have a quarterly journal publishing studied articles on political, economic and social issues. Consequently, *The Sarvajanik Sabha Journal* was started in 1878. This journal was the first of its kind. Almost every issue contained a contribution from Ranade. Ranade spent his summer vacations at Poona. Surendranath Banerjee was on a nationwide campaign against

the new rule reducing the maximum age for Indian candidates competing for the I.C.S. examination. This rule was intended to create additional difficulties for Indian candidates. When Surendranath Banerjee came to Poona on this mission, he was the guest of Ranade.

Phadke's Rebellion

While Ranade was enjoying his summer vacation in 1879 in Poona, two fires broke out in the city in one night; and these had repercussions on Ranade's career. The officials linked these fires with Phadke's rebellion, which in turn they connected with Ranade.

Wasudeo Balwant Phadke keenly felt the humiliation of living under foreign rule. Owing to poverty, he had to terminate his education at an early stage. For livelihood he had to seek employment in Government service. However, he constantly thought of how the country could be wrested from the clutches of foreigners. He was convinced that an armed revolution must be launched. He learnt shooting, riding, and sword play, and always kept a small store of weapons in the house. He was deeply hurt when he was refused leave to attend on his mother when she was on her death-bed. When such experience was repeated, he resigned his service and plunged into the work of armed revolution. He lectured in several towns in Maharashtra, exhorting people to rise in rebellion. He was disappointed at the total lack of response from the educated people, who regarded him

as crazy. He then approached people of the backward tribes, Ramoshis, Bhils and Kolis in several districts of the State; for, these tribes were daring by disposition and were accustomed to the use of weapons. Moreover, unlike the men in cities, they were far from law-abiding. Already in some areas they were carrying on plunder. Economic distress was driving many of them to resort to looting. They readily responded and accepted his leadership. The first step in his scheme of overthrowing the foreign rule was to collect money by robbing the rich. In April and May of 1879, they committed a good many dacoities around Poona. The people in Poona were seized with fear, after hearing the tales of refugees from the dacoit infested villages.

On the night of May 13, at midnight, Budhwar Wada and Vishrambag Wada, two memorials of the Peshwas in the Poona city, suddenly caught fire. There was great commotion throughout the city, as it was feared that Phadke's men had arrived to burn and plunder. Although it was learnt in the morning that there had been no plundering, the mysterious burning of the two buildings which housed some Government offices was interpreted as an advance action of Phadke. Who could be Phadke's helpers in the city of Poona? The top men in Government circles, who already suspected that the Sarvajanik Sabha was a seditious body, now believed that there was a conspiracy of educated Poona Brahmins to overthrow British rule and that Phadke's

rebellion was only a part of it. Anglo-Indian papers demanded the suppression of the Sarvajanik Sabha. The belief that the Sabha was at the root of these fires found further confirmation when it was revealed that the name of the man who set these fires was 'Ranade', though the man was yet to be found out. The Anglo-Indian paper *The Bombay Gazette* openly linked M. G. Ranade's name with that 'Ranade'. M. G. Ranade made an independent investigation, as a result of which the culprit Ranade was produced before the police. He had set fire to these offices in order to destroy evidence of his misappropriation of funds. In spite of this proof of M. G. Ranade's innocence in this matter, however, the Government's suspicion continued; and, within a week of the fires, Ranade received an order that he should take charge immediately as sub-judge at Dhulia, a place farther away from Poona. He was ordered to leave Poona immediately.

'Poona Brahmins' too had a taste of the Government's wrath. Phadke's patriotic rebellion failed—he was let down by his Ramoshi lieutenants who made away with the booty and he was captured in a forest in July. When he was brought to Poona for trial, the Government, apprehending trouble from the seditious elements of the city, imposed a curfew during the night, and proclaimed martial law. Even some well-placed Indian officers who took the curfew lightly and remained outside on the streets were arrested and kept in custody. Houses were

searched. People were terrorised. When Phadke's trial began, for sometime he could not find a lawyer in Poona to defend him. But 'Sarvajanik Kaka' G. W. Joshi showed courage. He took his brief. When someone asked him, "Do you realise the consequences of this?" Joshi said that he was prepared to be hanged along with Phadke.

Ranade, at Dhulia, continued to be under suspicion. He noticed that his letters seemed to have been opened and pasted again. Some of these letters were faked up bearing the signature of Wasudeo Balwant Phadke or Hari Ramoshi, giving information of the next raid, or about some weapons collected. Ranade used to send these letters to the magistrate. After about two months, the Assistant Collector, an Englishman, came to Ranade, took him out for a drive, and said casually, "I am very sorry I had to be distrustful towards you for the last few days."

Wasudeo Balwant Phadke kept a diary and had written an autobiography, which is the last thing an absconding revolutionary should do. These came into the hands of the Government and were produced during the prosecution. They clearly showed that the Poona Brahmins, had nothing whatsoever to do with the rebellion. Phadke was convicted and sentenced to deportation. He died as a prisoner in Aden in 1883. After the trial, Ranade wrote an article in *The Sarvajanik Sabha Journal*, analysing this episode. Critically examining the evidence and the judgement, he pointed out that only a

few of the dacoities were really conducted by Phadke. The rest were, therefore, not political. Analysing the past history and the circumstances of individual dacoits, he showed that the real causes of the unrest were not political but economic, that grinding poverty was the fundamental cause. And the chief cause of poverty, Ranade argued, was the inconsiderate revenue policy of the Government. Soon after, in 1880, 'Sarvajanik Kaka' Joshi passed away and Ranade thereby was deprived of a valuable friend and collaborator.

Displeasure Subsides

Gradually the suspicion of the Government about Ranade's complicity with Phadke's rebellion died away. In 1881, he was transferred to Bombay as Presidency Magistrate. He was there for three months. There once again he could have the pleasure and the benefit of the company of some of his intimate friends—Bhandarkar, Telang and Pherozeshah Mehta. They were men of great intellect and shared with Ranade a deep concern for the nation's welfare. He missed, however, his old friend and leader in the battle for social reform in 1870, Vishnushastri Pandit. Pandit had passed away in 1876. Ranade and Bhandarkar took the most prominent part in religious discussions in the study circle of the Prarthana Samaj. Discussing the nature of sin and its punishment, Ranade expressed the view that 'Narka' is only an unhappy state of the mind resulting from

realisation of one's sin but unable to prevent repetition of similar sin. 'Swarga' is the happy state of mind resulting from meritorious deeds. We have thus 'Swarga' and 'Narka' in this very world. This seems to be Ranade's attempt to reconcile old concepts with the new rational outlook; he did away with the notion that 'Swarga' and 'Narka' were supernatural worlds, and yet retained the essential idea that our deeds were rewarded according to their merits. Ranade attended and perhaps helped two widow-remarriages and the annual function of the Society for the Promotion of Widow Marriage. In his presidential speech at the annual function of the Society for the Encouragement of Elocution, he strongly deprecated lack of progress in the writing of Marathi books. He attributed it, firstly, to our general tradition that pursuit of knowledge was the business of one caste only. Secondly, our people had no zest for knowledge; they would not read even if books were given to them free of cost.

In one of the meetings of the study circle of the Prarthana Samaj, the question was raised: If there is a conflict between the path of divine truth and the stern behest of one's parents, should one give up parents and sever one's connection with them? An enthusiastic member averred that one must do so. Ranade took a different view. He said it was not proper to hurt our elders by insisting on what we considered to be the right path. They too had their own conception of what

was right; and what they insisted on was also what was right according to their view-point. We should convince our elders of the correctness of our view; and then both we and they should jointly act according to it. Suppose a law of the State was unjust and harmful; if a single individual disobeyed it, no good would result. One should make efforts to persuade others of the unjustness of the law, and when all were so persuaded, that law would be generally disrespected and broken. The same was true of the rules of conduct in the home. Persuasion was the remedy, not defiance.

This exposition of Ranade's views will enable the reader to understand Ranade's action in not marrying a widow when the occasion arose.

6

SERVING GOVERNMENT AND SERVING PEOPLE (1881 TO 1893)

From an individual's point of view, Government service has a threefold character: it offers a Government servant good chances of improving his economic and social position; it makes him a participant in the organisation which maintains order and holds society together; and it enables him to serve the people of his country. Individuals differ as to which of these characteristics they regard as the most important for themselves. Men in general value it for the first among these; Ranade belonged to the minority who stressed the last. Indeed, if a conflict arose between obtaining promotions and rendering service to people, he spurned the consideration of personal gain.

In a private letter to him, Sir Michael Westrop, the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court, wrote to him, "Your writings come in the way of your promotion.

If you want promotion, spare these great efforts." In his polite reply, Ranade made it clear that between promotion in Government service and serving the country through candid writing, he chose the latter, and that he was content to live on the salary he was getting. His transfers to Nasik and Dhulia were signs of the displeasure of the Government at his activities through the Sarvajanik Sabha. Baroda State, about this time, offered him a post carrying a much higher salary. Ranade wrote to the Chief Justice and the Governor that he was considering this offer because these transfers indicated the improbability of his promotion in the service of the British Government. Both, in their replies, without committing themselves regarding chance of promotion, advised him against acceptance of the offer. Ranade apparently took this an incident that the bias against him was removed, and declined the Baroda offer. But he would never agree to suppress his views concerning the welfare of the people.

By and large, there was no conflict between his duties as a Government servant and those as a servant of the people. Generally, they went together. He performed his duties conscientiously primarily because he loved the people whom, in his view, the State existed to serve. He regarded Government service as an avenue of public work. He, therefore, worked harder and with greater zeal than is normally done.

In 1881, Ranade was appointed to supervise the working of the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act. It was a special duty; and, besides, Ranade as a publicist was specially interested in it. In *The Sarvajanik Sabha Journal*, Ranade had published his own analysis of the riots in certain districts of the Deccan in 1875; and it is these riots which impelled the Government to pass this Act in 1879. The most apparent feature of these riots was the violent attacks on moneylenders by their oppressed debtors; and the Act was intended to relieve the agricultural classes from indebtedness. The Act was to operate in four districts. It provided for a system of conciliators and village munsiffs who would deal with cases involving small amounts and would arrange an amicable and reasonable settlement of the account. The system made judicial decisions fairer, cheaper and kinder. The courts under this system were not bound by the wording of contract alone, but would take into consideration the history and circumstances of the debt and would modify the debt so as to reduce the oppressive rate of interest. Other provisions abolished imprisonment for non-payment of the debt and prevented the sale of the land of the indebted. Conciliators were to be supervised by Subordinate judges, and these, in their turn, were to be under the supervision of the District or the Special Judge. The Special Judge, in his supervision work, was to be assisted by an Assistant Judge. It was to this last post that Ranade was appointed.

This system of conciliation was new, and serious doubts were expressed about its success. Fears were expressed that in its anxiety to ensure fairness to the debtor-cultivator, it might work so as to show undue favour to impecunious agriculturists. Moreover, the available conciliators were illiterate or ignorant of law. Much depended on those who supervised the system. Holding the scales even between the cultivators and the Sowkars, using wisely the wide discretion given to him and exercising revisional authority over sub-judges "most minutely and exhaustively, noticing every fact or circumstance bearing upon the point at issue and carefully examining every bit of evidence upon the record," Ranade rendered solid service to the people of the region. Other officers of his rank would stop only at taluk stations and obtain records there; but Ranade would go to all villages where there were conciliators. This involved a great many personal inconveniences like having to do for days together without milk, vegetables, fodder for bullocks and horses in the entourage and adequate water. He explained to his wife, "If I (stop at taluk towns and) send for the records, the cleverer sort of person gets an undue advantage over others. He misleads the inspecting officer about the condition of the villages. . . If I go myself (to the village), I can talk to the elderly people of the village about all kinds of things and get to know the real position." Ranade supervised the conciliation system for twelve years from 1881 to

1893, at first as special Sub-Judge and later as Special Judge; and his work contributed to the utmost for such success as the system achieved. Dr. A. J. Pollen, who was Special Judge for cases under this Act and was thus Ranade's superior, spoke of him as "a gentleman whose grasp of mind and keen powers of observation entitled his opinions to great weight." The success of the Act was partly due to the ability with which it was administered by judges like Ranade. Its operation was extended, with modifications, to many other districts of the Bombay Presidency. However, longer experience brought out its limitations and disadvantages; and stress was laid on other measures for the advancement of the cultivator in later years.

By 1881 the conservative and reactionary regime of Lord Beaconsfield (Disraeli) as England's Prime Minister, Lord Lytton as India's Viceroy and Sir Richard Temple as Governor of Bombay had come to an end, and a Liberal ministry had come to power with Gladstone as Prime Minister. Lord Ripon was India's Viceroy, and he held liberal views. Under his regime, Lord Reay, the Governor of Bombay, broke the convention that only an Englishman who was an I.C.S. would be appointed Law Member of the Bombay Legislative Council; he appointed, in 1885, Ranade to that post. It was an important position, though nothing like that of a Law Minister in a parliamentary form of government. In the letter offering it to Ranade, the Governor wrote

to him that his presence in the Council would enable the Government to benefit by his knowledge and earnestness for public weal. Ranade was appointed Law Member of the Council again in 1890 and in 1893.

On the eve of his entry into the Bombay Legislative Council, Ranade delivered a public lecture on 'The Business in the Council'. The Councils then existing were just executive councils to which a few (between four and eight) additional members were nominated for the purpose of legislation only. Only about a half of the persons so nominated were to be non-officials. The Government was British; some Indians were associated with it in the above manner only with the view that the British rulers should be in contact with the opinion of their subjects. This being the idea, the principle of nomination of non-official members by the Government was thought to be good enough. In this lecture, Ranade pleaded for the introduction of an elected element in the composition of the Council. Three years before this, at the initiative of the Governor-General, Lord Ripon, the Government of India had passed a resolution on local self-government. By it the Provincial Governments were to extend throughout the country local boards, two-thirds of whose members in each were to be non-officials. In selecting these, it was recommended that the system of elections should be adopted "as widely as the local circumstances may permit." Ranade, in his lecture, argued that "if the rights which Lord Ripon has given

us at the lower level are to be exercised with success, they should be obtained at the higher level also." Some members in the Legislative Councils also should be elected. "Conscious of the support of public opinion, they would speak and act with greater confidence than the nominated members." Ranade himself was a nominated member, but he expressed his independent views frankly. He was, however, handicapped by the fact that he was a Government servant, so that it was awkward to criticise his official superiors' views with harshness. In such situations, he conveyed his views to some other non-official members who spoke without Ranade's handicap. For instance, there was a bill to amend the Vatandars Act. As proposed by the officials, it aimed at abolishing some time-honoured rights of the Vatandars. Ranade, like any elected member on any body, wrote a critical note and suggested his own amendments in the committee, like any citizen of a free country; he wrote a comprehensive article on the subject in *The Sarvajanik Sabha Journal*; and, to escape his limitations as a Government servant, he briefed a non-official member to speak on controversial points.

In 1886, Ranade was appointed a member of the Finance Committee of the Government of India to study the problems of income and expenditure and to suggest measures of economy and retrenchment. This position was in addition to his membership of the Bombay Legislative Council; but he had to suspend

work as Special Judge at Poona. As a member of the Finance Committee, Ranade visited Simla, Calcutta, Madras and other places. In a letter to his friend and co-worker, Rao Bahadur G.W. Joshi, he said, "I prize my connection with it (the Committee) chiefly for the rare opportunities it affords of learning a good many details of large questions, the papers regarding which could not otherwise have been made available to us. Every subject I take up requires a good deal of reading." As its member, he worked assiduously. He wrote a number of minutes of dissent to the Committee's report. For instance, he objected to the proposed curtailment in the number of Sub-Judges and reduction of their pay-scales; he opposed retrenchment in the Education Department. As recognition of his work on the Committee, the Government conferred on him the title of C.I.E. in 1887.

During the long period of twenty-two years, from 1871 to 1893, that Ranade served in Poona as Judge, whatever activity in political, literary, social, religious and economic matters appeared in the city of Poona was prompted by Ranade. Whatever institutions or movements were started were indebted to him either for their origin or for their development. He had a grand vision of the possibilities of all-sided development of the country made possible by the invigorating contact of the British people; and he not only expressed the vision in his writings and speeches but also tried to realise it through every kind of public institutions.

In the political field, there was the Sarvajanik Sabha and its quarterly journal. In the cultural and literary fields, there were the Poona Summer Lectures series, the Elocution Encouraging Association, the Town Hall at Hirabag, the building of the Poona Native General Library, the Vernacular Translation Society and the Society for the Encouragement of Vernacular Literature. In the educational field, there were the Female High School and the Fergusson College. On the judicial side, there were the Lawad or Arbitration Court and the Sub-Judges' Conference. In the industrial field, there were the Industrial Conferences, the Industrial Exhibitions, the Reay Industrial Museum, the Cotton and Silk Spinning and Weaving Company, the Reay Paper Mill, the Metal Manufacturing Factory, the Poona Mercantile Bank, the Poona Dyeing Company, and the Industrial Association. On the religious side, there was the Prarthana Samaj. In the last quarter of the last century, these activities were new in their conception. Even the Elocution Encouragement Association was a novelty, inspired by a vision of an enlightened democratic India of the future. The institutions on the industrial side, such as the Cotton and Silk Spinning and Weaving Company and the Reay Paper Mill, were also the first of their kind, and were the first steps to realise a great dream of an industrially developed prosperous India.

Ranade's articles and speeches too must be counted as part of his public service because, not only did they

propagate progressive ideas but also, supported by deep study and original thinking, led the listeners to develop new ways of looking at things. Only one or two of his ideas may be mentioned here. As has been stated earlier, the provision in Lord Ripon's scheme of local self-government that some members of local bodies might be elected caused quite an excitement at the time. Speaking on how to vote in these elections, Ranade, like Burke, expressed the view that the representative was not a mere delegate but a trustee, whose function was also to teach and guide the voters. How Ranade viewed Indo-British relations is seen in another of his speeches. It should be noted that at that time parliamentary democracy in England was based on the limited franchise. Ranade said, "though we were a subject country, actually our position was not quite bad. In Britain itself out of three and a half crores of people, only twenty lakhs had a vote; yet it was universally agreed that the system there was a popular government. The position of Indians was like that of those Englishmen who did not have the vote. Unfranchised Englishmen could influence the Government; to some extent, we too could. Had we not influenced the Government and got the Press Act abolished? Our immediate task then was to increase our influence with the Government. This we could do by forming contacts with political parties in Britain and enlisting their sympathies."

Ranade had to tread the ground very carefully. A public meeting was held in Poona to protest against the conviction of Surendranath Banerjee for contempt of court committed in one of his articles in *The Bengalee*. Indian Sub-Judges were present at the meeting. Anglo-Indian papers raised a hue and cry against this action. It was in their opinion a seditious meeting which sympathised with a person disliked by the Government, and the Sub-Judges, Government servants as they were, should not have attended it. Such indiscipline should not be excused. Fortunately, the Governor Sir James Fergusson was a wise man, and the protest of the Anglo-Indian papers had little effect.

A Government officer who has to tour the villages runs the risk of some infection or other, and sanitary conditions were far worse in the days when Ranade was touring on duty. In 1891, when he was in a village camping in a temple, he got an attack of cholera. Fortunately his wife was with him. The village doctor did his best, but Ranade's condition was fast deteriorating and his wife, though resourceful, lost her nerve. His colour had changed; his palms and nails were becoming blue. Yet it was he who was comforting his wife, asking her not to be nervous. But his voice gradually sank, and became almost inaudible. Dr. Vishramji, the friend and family doctor, arrived from Poona in the morning. He took out a bottle, poured out a medicine in a glass, added some water, and handed

the glass to the patient. Ranade took the glass to his lips, but for some reason put it away and flung himself back on the pillows suddenly. He said to the doctor, "Please don't tease me like this. I am willing to take any medicine but this." It was, of course, brandy. After a great deal of persuasion, he gulped down the medicine, saying "Ram, Ram" softly.

Ranade took about two months to recover from this illness and start work again.

7 PROMOTING EDUCATION, ESPECIALLY AMONG WOMEN

The cause of education had always been near to Ranade's heart. Himself a product of the new educational system, he was convinced that Western learning which was conveyed through education could bring about a great transformation of the country and thus lift it from its prevailing degraded position. He was, therefore, eager to see the spread of education. He greatly deplored the social custom which denied education to women and which looked indignantly on any attempt to educate them.

In 1882, the Hunter Commission was appointed to review the educational system of India. Ranade then wrote a couple of articles on this subject in *The Sarvajanik Sabha Journal*. There were reports that the official proposals included curtailing expenditure on higher

education and diverting the funds so saved to the spread of primary education. The conducting of high schools and colleges under these proposals would be left to private bodies. Ranade expressed himself strongly against these proposals, under which higher education was to suffer. If the Government were to withdraw from this field, funds for it would have had to be raised from fees or by private education societies collecting donations. The middle classes could not shoulder the financial burden if the fees of their wards were to be raised to the required extent. Private agencies like education societies could never have adequate funds. Ranade was anxious that the standard of higher education should be maintained at a high level. This was the need of the age. This required not only adequate funds but also that the Government itself should maintain some high schools and colleges to set standards for private institutions. But the strongest criticism against these proposals was that they would favour Christian missionary bodies conducting colleges; virtually the Government and other colleges would be handed over to them, for they alone were in possession of ample funds collected from foreign countries. Ranade wrote: "Under no conceivable circumstances can the education of a great nation like the Hindus be solely or chiefly entrusted to persons who have come to this country to destroy the national faiths and to convert the nation to Christianity and whose work is supported by the charitable contributions of pious people from foreign

countries. Such a dereliction of the State's chief duty is opposed to all modern conceptions. The Hindus are not like the savages of the Sandwich and Society Islands, without a religion of their own and so easily liable to be converted en masse to at nominal Christianity." Ranade desired that the expenditure on primary education should be increased, but this increase must not be at the cost of higher education. It was the wasteful expenditure on the army which should be curtailed, he had suggested.

Promoting education among women was a social problem. Not financial considerations but public opinion was what obstructed it. Society was dreadfully keen that women must not be educated. Sharp opposition to women's education came from women no less than from men. Illiteracy was the correct thing; literacy in Marathi could be barely tolerated and that too only if it was used to read religious books exclusively. Literacy in English was something abhorent. Ranade's first practical effort in the direction of this reform was to educate one woman, his wife. His first wife, who passed away in 1873, was literate in Marathi. But when he married again, the very first day he met his second wife he learnt that she was not literate. He immediately ordered a slate and a pencil and gave her the first lesson in the Marathi alphabet. And that was raising a hornet's nest.

Ranade's household consisted of about thirty to forty persons, perhaps more. Its members included, besides himself, his wife, two brothers, eight to ten women, four

or five students and sons of some relatives in mofussil towns. The internal administration of the house was conducted by the women. Ranade's step-mother, her mother, widowed sister and an aunt were the elderly women. Ranade never asserted himself against them, and paid them the regard due to elders. As compared to them, Ranade's wife, Ramabai, was but a minor figure. She was a girl of fourteen, innocent, sensitive, and completely devoted to her husband. While she was determined to follow her husband, all the elderly women were enraged at Ranade's non-conformist and outrageous behaviour in educating his wife. Poor Ramabai had to spend the whole of the day among them. She was subjected to scornful jeers from all of them at every opportunity. She would take lessons from him and study upstairs in their room every evening. But if she ever read a single word outside the room, woe be to her! Hardly a fortnight after she had learnt the English alphabet she was caught reading a scrap of newspaper while sweeping the hall. She was just seeing whether she could read it at all. All the women gathered round and jeered, "Your office is upstairs. There you may read or write. But here you must not read and insult us." The sneers of the women all the day were becoming unbearable. Every incident which reminded the women of the 'educatedness' of Ramabai—tuition by an English lady, visits of Pandita Ramabai, the learned woman social reformer, attending meetings of a Manila Samaj—brought forth from them indirect taunts.

When she returned from a weekly meeting, they would say, "You must not enter the kitchen and try to serve food. After all, women who attend meetings should not do these menial duties. They should always sit upstairs with men! You are a lady, we downstairs are all your humble slaves!" Such remarks from elders pierced her heart. Often she felt like weeping. But Ranade would comfort her and advise her to bear this suffering in silence. Once a meeting was held to place before the Governor, Sir James Fergusson, the demand for a high school for girls in Poona. By now Ramabai could barely read. She was assigned the task of reading the address to the Governor. Ranade wrote the address and got it read by her at home seven or eight times; and then she read it out at the public meeting. Hearing this, the women at home harangued her for several hours. "So far this reading and writing had been going on inside the house; but today even that limit has been crossed." Turning to Ranade, his aunt said, "Are you not ashamed to see your wife reading out in English in the presence of two thousand people?" Ranade heard it all quietly. When, at night, the husband and wife went upstairs, Ranade said, "Let us make up our minds to withstand this severe attack with courage and patience. We shall give no room for adding to the fury. Please do not hurt her or answer back. Remember this—never say anything, but never fail to do what you consider to be correct and proper."

Like widow-remarriage, women's education was an important issue on which the social reformers and the orthodox were sharply divided. And everybody was orthodox, except the few pronounced reformers. It was feared by the orthodox that women on learning English would adopt English women's ways of thought and behaviour; they would treat men as equals, would mix freely with them, and would stop doing domestic work as did the wives of English officials. This was all against the traditional Hindu culture of the time. On the other hand, the reformers pleaded that the English language was the vehicle of a worthy type of culture and that women should not be kept shut off from it. Besides, they disliked the cultural disparity between the educated husband and his wife ignorant of English. Social conservatism in Maharashtra received a new impetus with the powerful advocacy of its cause by Vishnu Krishna Chiplunkar through his Marathi monthly *Nibandhamala* started in 1874. This journal ushered in a new era of cultural nationalism of which the foremost leader was Bal Gangadhar Tilak. One characteristic of this cultural nationalism was that it minimised the need for social reform. The orthodox social conservatives found great support in the English-educated group of cultured nationalists. Both joined in defending old customs and in rejecting Western influences.

It is against this background that Ranade initiated a move to start a high school for girls in Poona. William

Wedderburn, the Collector of Poona, handed over to Ranade a donation of 1000 rupees to be devoted to Indian women's education. Ranade then collected a few thousand rupees more. In 1882, he called a meeting of friends and sympathisers which decided to start a high school for girls. Its sponsors included, besides Ranade, R. G. Bhandarkar, W. A. Modak and Shankar Pandurang Pandit. They obtained a site from the Government. And thus was started the Female High School of Poona. The orthodox opposition expressed itself strongly and generally admitted that women may be educated up to some extent, say up to the primary school level, but denied the necessity of a high school.

The paper *Poona Vaibhava* said that Ranade, Pandit and other sponsors of the school were out to spoil the character of women, and made remarks against the character of English women whom English-educated Indian women were sure to imitate. For these remarks Ranade compelled the editor to publish an apology. The school worked in an atmosphere of public hostility. In a subsequent year, Tilak's paper *Kesari* objected that the system of education of the Female High School involved Western customs and manners, which were held up before the school girls as the ideal. These criticisms were answered by the reformers. But cultured nationalists like Tilak and blindly orthodox conservatives like the editor of *Poona Vaibhava* were always suspicious that English education would turn out Anglicised girls. In

1888, Professor Jinsiwale, a widely-read scholar with a remarkable memory and a fascinating orator, but an irresponsible man, attacked the management of the Female High School. He made a false statement that its English Head Mistress once made the girls eat plantains eaten of by herself. Considering that for Hindu girls to eat food eaten of by Christians meant falling prey to an irrevocable excommunication from the Hindu community, this was a very serious charge against the Head Mistress. Jinsiwale's statement was challenged and he had to apologise.

Ranade was one of the sponsors of the Deccan Education Society which was founded in 1884 for starting a college, named afterwards as 'Fergusson College'. Three young idealists, Vishnushastri Chiplunkar, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, had started a school called the New English School in 1880, with a view to inculcating in the students the quality of patriotism. They were joined by a few others, and they started two weeklies, the *Kesari* in Marathi and *The Mahratta* in English. Chiplunkar, their leader, died; but the group continued to work. In 1884, they decided to start a college in Poona. For this ambitious project they thought they should have an influential governing body; and so they held a meeting to form the Deccan Education Society. By a resolution proposed by Tilak, Ranade was elected as one among the five patrons, along with the Governor, Sir James Fergusson, Wedderburn, Telang

and H. R. Chiplunkar. The college was named 'Fergusson College' and was opened in 1885. It was the first college in which all professors were Indians, in which teachers looked upon education as their life's mission, and in which the ideal was to inculcate patriotism. Ranade appreciated greatly the spirit and the idealism of the youths who had undertaken this enterprise and gave them his full support. A complicated question soon arose. In 1886, the Government offered to hand over to the Deccan Education Society the Government college in Poona, namely, the Deccan College. Ranade, who was in Calcutta, saw through this offer the Government's desire to reduce its expenditure on higher education. To this Ranade had strong objection. During the negotiations between the Government and the Society, Ranade gave his advice by telegram to the Society's representatives: "Compromise on following terms— grant of 25,000 for ten years, besides fees; no compulsion to appoint European professors; no outside interference in management." These terms were unacceptable to the Government, and the negotiations broke down.

In 1889, Ranade gave his valued support to a semi-educational institution called Sharadasadan. The institution was intended to provide a home and a school for widows. As could be expected, the orthodox group was hostile to it, since it combined two aspects of social reform, namely, a concern for widows and an opportunity for women's education. This institution

was founded by a lady known as Pandita Ramabai. She was a remarkable woman. Her father, Anantashastri Dongre, was a learned scholar originally belonging to Mangalore. Persecuted by his relations and neighbours for teaching Sanskrit lore to the women of the house, he had to leave his home town and wander from place to place. He died penniless, and his wife too died soon after. His two children, the boy Shrinivas aged 22 years and the girl Rama aged 16 years eked out a living by giving recitals of Sanskrit pieces. In the course of their wanderings they reached Calcutta, where the Brahmo leaders and some scholars of the University gave them due encouragement. Just then Shrinivas died; and Ramabai, unflinching, pursued her studies and scholarship. She earned the epithet 'Pandita'. She gave lectures in Calcutta on the high status of women in ancient India and advocated women's right to education. She was unsparing in her criticism of the current form of Hinduism which declared that there was no salvation for women nor for men other than Brahmins. She married a learned Brahmo Samajist Bengali gentleman who was a Shudra by caste; but within a year and a half, he too died, leaving behind Ramabai and their little daughter. For some reason or other, Ramabai decided to settle down in Poona in 1882.

The life-story and the character of Pandita Ramabai were such as would naturally evoke the sympathy and admiration of social reformers. Her learning and

eloquence were an asset to the reform movement. Ramabai started an assembly of women called the Arya Mahila Samaj and wives of reformers, including Ramabai Ranade, were the leading members of it. After some time she decided that she should go to England and acquire Western learning first-hand. She, therefore, wrote a book on the problems of women, and the proceeds of its sale provided her with funds to travel abroad. In England she was deeply impressed by the humanitarian work for fallen and forsaken women, and she felt that it was the life and teachings of Jesus Christ which alone could inspire such noble work. She, together with her daughter, adopted the Christian religion. She returned to India in 1889.

On her return from abroad, she started in Bombay her Sharadasadan, the institution, the main objective of which was to give succour and provide a home to widows in distress; in addition, it would provide them education, academic, moral and technical. A little later she shifted the institution to Poona. Her colleague, a European lady, addressed a meeting explaining the purpose of the institution. At the end of the meeting, Ranade proposed that a society should be formed on the spot to support and conduct such a laudable institution for such a noble purpose. About forty influential persons in the audience became members of the Society, and the institution began to prosper. Bhandarkar and Agarkar were among its supporters. But the anti-reformers began

to attack the institution. Their main objection was that such an institution should not be entrusted to a woman who had embraced Christianity. Ranade's reply was that the religious faith of the head did not matter, since the purpose was humanitarian, deserving support from persons of all faiths. The critics, however, obtained some evidence which raised a legitimate suspicion that the institution would encourage the conversion of its pupils to Christianity. In reply, Ramabai's representative declared in a newspaper that the staff and the management would act only in such a way as would not offend against the customs and religious susceptibilities of the people. However, it was a fact that Pandita Ramabai had obtained patronage from rich Christians in America. "I approached Christians," declared Ramabai, "because Hindus did not come forth with donations for such an institution." The implication of this statement—that as things were, the institution had a moral right to propagate Christianity—was not liked by Ranade and his friends, and they dissociated themselves from this published letter of Ramabai. After some explanations, the Ranade group agreed to continue its support. Tilak's *Kesari* said that the naive supporters of the Christian women whose hidden intention was conversion were also enemies of Hindu society. Ranade explained that he and his friends had thought of resigning from the body but had postponed the step pending clarification of certain points by the American missionary patrons. In the

meanwhile, there was growing evidence in favour of the allegations of the critics. Ranade was convinced; and he, Bhandarkar and Bhat resigned their membership of the society. In a letter to the American missionary patrons, written in 1893, they said, "We have strong reasons to believe that many of the girls are induced to attend her (Ramabai's) private prayers regularly and read the Bible, and that Christian doctrines are taught to them. Pandita Ramabai has also shown her active missionary tendencies by asking the parents and guardians of girls to allow them to attend her prayers and, in one case at least, to become Christians themselves; and we are assured that two of the girls have declared to their elders that they have accepted Christ. Such a departure from the original understanding cannot fail, in our opinion, to shake the stability of the institution... If the Sadan is to be conducted as an avowed proselytising institution, we must disavow all connection with it." With all his reverence for Jesus Christ and Christianity, Ranade was strongly against proselytisation. How deeply he detested it is evident from his attack on an official proposal on higher education which would have resulted in its being handed over by the Government to Christian missionary organisations. But he was misguided by Pandita Ramabai. Before her visit abroad, Ranade knew her as an ardent colleague in the work of social reform; and though she returned from her visit as a Christian, he believed that social reform and not Christianity was her life's

mission. He did not realise the bitterness which orthodox persecution of her family had generated in her, for no other fault except that the family believed in women's education, and in spite of her mastery of Sanskrit lore. From her personal experience, she regarded Hinduism as a heartless, pitiless, senseless creed, and thought that national progress was impossible unless the nation gave it up. Ranade stood for a synthesis; he had understood that the best in Hinduism was as good as the best in Christianity, and that though free religious enquiry was something admirable, proselytisation of Hindus was an insult to a hoary, civilised nation.

8 HIS IMPACT ON POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

Influence

For centuries India had been familiar with gatherings, processions and associations. But, apart from decision-making bodies like the Panchayats, these have existed mostly to follow or to obey authorities, religious or political. Meetings and disputations of learned men may also be cited as exceptions; and there must have been ample freedom to choose an authority for oneself, otherwise new religious cults could not have arisen. But, by and large, such authorities dominated. When the English-educated class of Indians came to know Western society, they saw a different type of group life which had democratic characteristics. There, enlightened men conceived new aims and objects contributing to social good; to pursue these aims and

objects they organised formal associations, addressed meetings, wrote books and conducted periodicals; they gathered adherents through persuasion; and thus they obtained influence over the State and society. Indians who desired the transformation of the nation immediately recognised the value of these newly known instruments of developing influence. Ranade was one of those pioneers who utilised them. He sponsored numerous associations in Poona; he arranged several public meetings; and he caused a quarterly journal to be started by the Sarvajanik Sabha. The secret of his own influence, however, was not only the use of these means of influence but also his sound study and deep thought which gave weight to his opinions and suggestions.

The Sarvajanik Sabha Journal, started in 1878, was the main channel of the expression of his views. Under Ranade's guidance, the journal acquired prestige. Most of the articles in it, including his own, used to be unsigned. Ranade's supervision over the journal used to be very close; he used to read every article and touch it up wherever necessary. "I have changed your article beyond recognition," he once wrote to a friend who was a sound economist himself. It is possible to identify Ranade's own unsigned articles because Shri G. A. Mankar, a close friend of Ranade's, has given a list of them in his biography of Ranade.

Politics (1878 to 1885)

Reference has already been made to the conservative imperialist regime, from 1876 to 1880, of Disraeli-Salisbury-Lytton. In Bombay Presidency, the regime was represented by the Governor, Sir Richard Temple, who vacated his office on the fall of the Disraeli ministry. In an article in 1882 Ranade denounced the regime in forceful language: "Lord Lytton and his colleagues, under the influence of imperialistic ideas, sought eagerly for opportunities to reverse both the foreign and the domestic policy, which till then had been invariably professed and to some extent carried out... the policy of governing India in the interests of its own people, instead of subordinating them to the interests of the English governing class. The abolition of cotton duties, the gagging of the vernacular press, the saddling of India with the responsibility and the cost of the Afghan War, the misappropriation of the famine insurance fund, the proclamation of the Imperial title with pomp and ceremony in Delhi while the fairest provinces of the Empire were devastated by famine and cyclonic eruptions, the enforced negotiations with the Native States in the matter of salt and opium monopolies, all these measures were dictated by the same set of motives which, if they had been openly avowed, would have found but little support or justification in the moral sentiment and the political wisdom of the English people." On Sir Richard Temple's administration he

wrote: "He had no love for the people... His pride of Englishism was intense to overbearing, and he thought the native races were all to be patted like children, and had no further purpose in life but to remember gratefully the hired services of every white man in the country. . . He had no love for free institutions, and took care to secure himself from all possibility of conflict with independent views. His rule was essentially one of self-seeking and self-laudation and eminently demoralising in its consequences." Ranade, thus, had faith in the moral sentiment and the political wisdom of the English people. He held that even though the rulers were foreign, they should not possess "imperialistic ideas" but should "govern India in the interests of its (India's) own people." They should welcome independence of views among Indians. It is from this moral-political stand-point that he praised or condemned administrative policies or actions. Such writing must have stirred the conscience of Englishmen and raised moral indignation among Indians.

There was in his writings a combination of the vision of the ideal and the realisation of what was practicable. For instance, in his recommendations regarding a typical constitution of a Native State, he proposed just those changes in the direction of responsible government which had a chance of being accepted and worked out with a fair amount of success, considering the reluctance of the British to part with

power and the political incapacity of the people in the States. The misgovernment in the Native States was due to the irresponsibility of the Native rulers; Ranade was content if this irresponsibility was checked. He, therefore, proposed nomination of a 'responsible' minister appointed by the ruler, subject to the approval of the Governor-General, whose tenure would be secure from the whims of the ruler. The ruling chief must not exercise power except when there was an appeal against the minister; and decisions on new taxation, innovations in administration, and problems relating to relations with other States or with the paramount power would be taken by a Council of Superior Officers (heads of departments) in the administration. There would be separation between private purse and public funds, between the executive and the judiciary, and between civil and military duties. Laws would be written. Thus, in his proposals, Ranade aimed at a clean well-organised administration, and did not raise issues about the ideal form of government.

Important among other subjects he dealt with were the civil service appointments policy, local government in England and India, and the proposal of factory legislation in India. It will seem strange now, but Ranade opposed the proposal of factory legislation. He argued that behind this proposal was the Government's concern, not for labourers, but for the Manchester manufacturers. In Indian factories actually, there was

no overwork or danger to life or limb against which protection was needed. The proposed measure was calculated to put obstacles in the way of the Bombay cotton industry which competed with Manchester. If the intention was really to protect labour, why were the jute mills, ginning factories, indigo, tea and coffee plantations, all of which were owned by Englishmen, exempted from this legislation?

In 1880, the conservative-imperialistic regime ended. Gladstone of the Liberal Party became the Prime Minister of England, and Lord Ripon the Viceroy of India. The aggressive, racialist policy was reversed; peace was made with Afghanistan and the Vernacular Press Act was repealed. A beginning was made in local self-government by establishing a system of local boards or corporations. These measures gave educated Indians the first taste of democracy of the virtues of which they had, till then, only read in books. Ranade wrote in commendation of these liberal measures. Lord Ripon was in sympathy with the aspirations of educated Indians and received due praise. But for holding these very views, he had to face opposition from a majority of European officials in India.

The existing system of legal administration discriminated between European and Indian judges; no district and sessions judge could try a European on a criminal charge unless the judge was a European. (This rule did not apply to Presidency towns.) One of the

Indian judges complained that he in his higher position could not try cases which his subordinate European joint magistrate could. The Bengal Government recommended removal of this anomaly. Lord Ripon agreed, and instructed Sir Courtney Ilbert, the Law Member, to draft a bill accordingly. The introduction of this bill in 1883 provoked a huge uproar among Europeans all over the country. They regarded the bill as an encroachment on their legitimate privilege. They formed an association, collected a big fund, held meetings in all towns, and boycotted Lord Ripon's functions. The speeches they made were most intemperate. Lord Ripon had to yield; and the bill was so modified as to satisfy Europeans. The whole agitation and its success was a great eye-opener to Indians. It taught them that they could not hope to win equality of status without putting up a long fight against the privileged class of Europeans in India. Indians too held meetings and published articles presenting the case for justice. When the matter was finally decided against Indians, Ranade wrote an article in *The Sarvajanik Sabha Journal*. He said that the conclusion to be drawn from the controversy was that all Europeans in India belonged to the Conservative party, while all educated Indians represented Liberalism. "These are the Liberal and Conservative forces at work in India." British rule has done great good to this country; and it is the good effects of it alone which make it desirable. "The aegis of British protection is an acknowledged necessity. . . But it is not

as the representative of brute force, but of the order and genius of equal law, that we bow down to this supreme necessity." He implies that treating Indians as inferiors removes the moral justification of British rule. And he says further, "There can be no question that a nation of 250 millions can never be permanently held down by sheer force and sooner or later in God's Providence, and under the encouragement of British example and discipline, the people of this country must rise to the status of a self-governed community, and learn to control their own affairs in subordinate alliance with England." He thus frankly stated the political ideal and envisaged a struggle, in alliance with the British Liberals, to achieve that ideal.

In the 1880's, a few political associations of Indians had come into existences in cities in different parts of India— in Bombay, Poona, Calcutta and Madras. But none of them was organised on an all-India basis. Railways had by now connected all cities in India; and the feasibility of organising all-India conferences and associations occurred to several Indian leaders. Surendranath Bannerjee was the first to pursue this idea. He travelled throughout the country in connection with the I.C.S. question; but the true purpose of this agitation was the awakening of a spirit of unity and solidarity among the people of India. As has been mentioned above, at Poona, Surendranath Bannerjee was the guest of Ranade. Imperialistic policies which Ranade and others had

attacked had created a general desire for a countrywide political organisation. A few fair-minded Englishmen, like A. O. Hume and William Wedderburn, also shared this desire. Consequently, in 1885 there were two gatherings of leaders from all over the country, one at Calcutta and the other at Bombay, which merged into one a little later. This was the Indian National Congress. Ranade's role in founding the Congress was very prominent. Being a Government servant, he could not be a delegate; but in its informal meetings he played a prominent part. While the conference at Bombay was discussing the name to be adopted for the organisation, and when several names were suggested—for instance, National Union, National Conference, National League—it was Ranade who suggested the name, 'Indian National Congress'. In the Congress, Ranade was important enough to send, in 1895, a wire to Surendranath Bannerjee offering him the presidentship of the Congress at Poona. "Mr. Ranade was," writes Surendranath, "in regard to all public movements in the Western Presidency, the power behind the throne."

Economics (1878 to 1893)

Ranade's writings on economics breathed the spirit of compassion. In its formal structure each article was an array of statistical or historical facts and of opinions of all concerned persons, followed by an analysis and a conclusion. But the conclusions had an intimate

relation to the problem of India's poverty. There was no article which did not say something of importance for the solution of that problem. Though living in ample comfort, Ranade felt uneasy with poverty all around him. Underlying the apparently dry discussion of economic facts, there was a glow of love and sympathy, which occasionally revealed itself in a phrase or two. "He is truly a saint who regards the miserable and the harassed as his kin"; this was the verse of saint Tukaram which was ever on Ranade's lips. Herculean efforts were required to remove the poverty of the Indian people, and the Government which alone could undertake them was indifferent. This caused him deep agony.

To appreciate the significance of Ranade's writings on economics, it is necessary to note that, unlike what obtains today, the Government was doing absolutely nothing to promote economic welfare. The agrarian riots in certain districts impelled it to pass the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act in 1879 to protect the poor and illiterate cultivator from the greed of the moneylender, and the series of famines in the last quarter of the century compelled it to pass measures to mitigate suffering in the famine-stricken areas; but these were humanitarian measures to relieve acute distress. It was Dadabhai Naoroji and Ranade who first saw that the whole problem of national poverty needed to be solved; and it was Ranade who first stressed the great role which the

Government was required to play if poverty was to be removed.

Ranade published a number of studies in *The Sarvajanik Sabha Journal*. On the lines of the Indian National Congress which dealt with politics and the Indian Social Conference which dealt with social reform, he wanted to start an Indian Industrial Conference to promote efforts for the economic advance of the country; but he did not succeed. He could, however, organise in 1890 the Industrial Association of Western India, and he expressed his views on economic matters in his addresses delivered before it. Besides, he spoke on economic questions in his lectures elsewhere. The range of topics was wide, covering agriculture, industries, organisation of credit, public finance, tariff, emigration, and census statistics. The essence of his economic ideas was as follows.

To remove the poverty of the country, the most essential thing was the development of manufacturing industries. Growth of steamships and railways had drawn India into the world market; and British-manufactured goods had been destroying Indian cottage industries, while India had been exporting more and more of raw materials. The damage done by the destruction of her industries was far greater than the advantage gained from increased exports. Natural resources were favourable for the growth of industries; but the industries must be of the manufacturing type,

utilising power-driven machinery, like those in England. Only manufacturing industries could withstand foreign competition. They could then attract labour from rural areas, and relieve the excessive pressure on rural agriculture caused by the destruction of the old-type industries of Indian towns. India would no longer remain wholly dependent on the single and precarious source, namely, agriculture. Industrialisation, however, required immense capital. Indians showing courage to invest in industries were extremely small in number. Ranade organised the Industrial Conference largely to spread the gospel of financing and starting industrial concerns. Ranade, through his addresses and essays, tried to persuade people, with all his eloquence and might, to save and invest their savings in industries; and, on the other hand, he tried to persuade the Government, with all his learning and debating skill, to render active help to the process of industrialisation. The Government was unwilling, firstly, because its masters in England were obsessed by the doctrine of *laissez-faire* and, secondly, because the British masters were compelled to defend British manufacturers. Ranade, therefore, quoted an example of an imperialistic government itself promoting, of its own accord, economic and industrial development of the subject country, namely, the Dutch Government experimenting with the 'culture system' in Netherlands India. He refrained from proposing a policy of protection because it would be unacceptable

to the Government; but he pressed for Government help in various other ways, such as providing technical assistance, finding markets, and supplying capital. The most urgent need, however, was capital. "The want being national, the nation has a right to expect its rulers to supply the want." Local or municipal boards, or specially created corporate boards of trade and commerce, should undertake the development of industries in their areas; the Government should lend money to these bodies at low rates of interest from people's savings invested in Government stocks or in Post Office savings accounts. In deserving cases the Government should guarantee minimum profits in the initial period, or help a company to float its own debentures. "There can be no doubt," Ranade says, "that the permanent salvation of the country depends upon the growth of Indian manufactures and commerce, and that all other remedies can only be temporary palliatives."

However, the difficulties of agriculturists, who formed the bulk of the population, required urgent consideration. Ranade agreed with the objects of the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act, namely, protecting the ryot from the frauds of the moneylender, simplifying the procedure of law, and granting relief to the farmer from the weight of indebtedness. He worked as a Special Judge to try cases under it for its success. But he held that the chief cause of the farmer's misery was

excessive and increasing land revenue imposed by the Government. Moreover, he pointed out that the Act was a negative measure giving protection to the farmer; positive action was required to supply to him the needed capital. Acting on the theory that the State was the owner of all land, the Government imposed as heavy a revenue as possible and revised it upwards from time to time. Ranade wanted that the Government should give up this theory, recognise the ownership of the ryot, impose only a reasonable rate of revenue, and refrain from raising it in future except to adjust it with rising prices. He tried to assure the Government that it need not fear loss of revenue if this proposal was carried out. "Permanent settlement fixed in kind" would give a sense of relief to the farmer and change his attitude, and as a result the general resources of the country would be so developed that the Government would be able to realise larger amounts from other taxes." The ryots and the middle classes will look upon their land as their own property. . . Without such a guarantee of full property, all endeavours to ameliorate the condition of the ryots must fail to produce any but temporary benefit." The farmers would then feel encouraged to invest capital in land.

To provide adequate supply, Ranade suggested the organisation of credit. Agricultural banks should be started, meant especially for the benefit of agriculturists. The Government should give financial help, and even

guarantee, to these special banks. The banks should lend money to small Sowkars at low rates of interest, and the Sowkars in their turn should lend this money to agriculturists at controlled rates. For this scheme, the Government would require funds; these could be borrowed from the public. Side by side with these banks, Ranade advocated co-operative banks; Ranade was a pioneer in this field.

On Indian public finance, Ranade endorsed the views of Prof. Fawcett, a member of the British Liberal Party, that India being poor, additional taxation was most inexpedient, that severe retrenchment in expenditure was necessary, and that economy should be effected by substituting cheaper services of Indians in place of those of Europeans involving much higher salaries. Ranade also endorsed Prof. Fawcett's condemnation of abolishing the cotton import duties to please the Manchester manufacturers, thereby causing a loss of revenue at a time when the Government of India faced financial difficulties.

Officials in India obstinately opposed Ranade's views, on the ground that they were opposed to the sound economic theory of the Classical School; according to this school, non-interference by the State in economic affairs was the beneficial policy. Ranade then embarked on the refutation of the doctrines of the Classical School itself. This he did in 1892 in his address at the Deccan College, Poona, on the subject 'Indian Political Economy'. As against the Classical School, he

commended the latest doctrines of the Historical School and those of the German economist, List.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, there was a crop of similar political and economic ideas in all parts of India. Among those who wrote on economic problems, the most outstanding were Dadabhai Naoroji who had taken up residence in England, Dinshaw Wacha and K. T. Telang in Bombay, Ranade and G. W. Joshi in Poona and Satara, R. C. Dutt in Bengal and G. Subramania Iyer in Madras. They were all developing, in mutual co-operation, an Indian point of view. At one place R. C. Dutt paid fine compliments to the Sarvajanik Sabha and its journal; while Ranade, reviewing a book by Dadabhai Naoroji, complimented the author saying, "Prof. Dadabhai has done right yeoman's service in meeting the enemy on his own lists, and removing the veil from these mysteries of Indian administration." In this development of the Indian point of view, Ranade's contribution was greatest. Sir J. C. Coyajee, a well known economist of a later generation, says of Ranade: "He was the first economist of India... He was the first in the sense of approaching almost all the most important economic problems of our country and in giving a comprehensive view of these in the light of a proper background of economic theory." It was Ranade who provided a theoretical basis to the economic thought of his Indian contemporaries. He well deserves the title later economists conferred on him, 'Father of Indian Economics'.

9 THE SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENT (1884 TO 1892)

From the time when the social boycott of Ranade, for having attended a widow-remarriage, wore off in 1873, for some years there were no incidents worth relating in the field of social reform. This does not mean that Ranade was inactive. In 1881, he started a movement of signing pledges that the signatories would observe certain reformed practices. Besides, he started a signature campaign pledging to accept the rule that no marriages should be arranged between boys below 17 and girls below 10. He did canvassing among members of Legislative Councils to persuade them that they should try to introduce some legislation which would promote social reform; he said that discussion in a Legislative Council would focus public attention on social problems, and that that would be a distinct

gain. Ranade's labours in founding a girls' high school in Poona in 1882 and his defence of its administration against unwarranted attacks from the anti-reformers constituted work for the cause of social reform as much as for that of education. When Pandita Ramabai came to Poona, Ranade and his reformer friends co-operated with her in starting an assembly of women called the Arya Mahila Samaj. The Samaj met once a week. It was a great step towards advancement of women, but was resented by the public in general.

About the year 1884, social reform work which was going on steadily in Maharashtra took a dramatic turn. Two incidents — the formation of the Rakhmabai Defence Committee and the circulation of 'Malabari's Notes' — stoked the fires of controversy. In 1884, one Dadaji brought a suit demanding that his wife Rakhmabai come to live in his house. Rakhmabai was married to him when she was 13. While a minor, even after her marriage, she continued to live with her parents, who educated her, while her husband remained illiterate and uncultured. She was the owner of handsome property; he had developed consumption. The cultural and other differences between the couple were so much that she was repelled by the idea of having to live with him. The High Court decided the case in his favour. Reformers, since women's education and women's liberty were parts of their creed, sympathised with her. They formed a Rakhmabai Defence Committee to

find out a way by which her calamity could be averted, Ranade, Telang (a brilliant Bombay lawyer and leader of social reformers) and others joined it. Anti-reformers condemned these gentlemen for making a fetish of women's rights. Some fundamental questions arising from the situation were discussed. Ranade gave a lecture showing that the Hindu Smritis had conferred many rights on women which were forgotten and which should be restored to them by legislation. Ranade's position was challenged by a Sanskrit scholar, W. S. Apte, and by B. G. Tilak writing in the *Kesari*.

More stormy, and more prolonged, was the controversy on 'Malabari's Notes'. Malabari was a Parsi gentleman who, in spite of great poverty in boyhood and youth, persisted in his ambitions; he read widely, acquired a good style, and developed into a poet and a journalist. He had a poet's heart and was extremely sensitive to the sufferings of others. He had transcended the boundaries of religion and caste. He was greatly moved by the anguish of women of the Hindu community caused by its cruel customs. In 1884, he wrote two pamphlets entitled 'Infant Marriage' and 'Compulsory Widowhood'; these pamphlets came to be known as 'Malabari's Notes'. They were ably and forcefully written. He sent them to all important officials and leaders in India and also to several persons in England. In them Malabari had proposed a legal amendment to raise the age of consent from ten to twelve. Under the

then existing law, sexual intercourse by a man with his wife was a crime if the wife was below ten but not if she was even a little above that age; Malabari sought that this age of consent should be raised to twelve. Ranade wrote to Malabari that the latter could count on his support. This support took the form of scholarly efforts. Ranade made a further study of Hindu scriptures and ancient law books with a view to studying their implications in respect of women's rights. The outcome of this study was Ranade's learned introduction to a book, written by one N. K. Vaidya, containing a history of the efforts which led to the passing of the Act in 1856 permitting widow-remarriages. In it Ranade reviewed the rise and erosion of women's rights during the long course of history. Besides, he also discussed how far State legislation in such matters was justifiable and desirable. A little later, Ranade wrote an article published in the *Dnyanprakash*. He wrote that differing social customs prevailed in different parts of the country because, firstly, several non-Aryan customs crept in at different places and at different times; and, secondly, there was, at the moment, no central controlling authority. His conclusion was that the one authority which could bring order into our conflicting and often harmful customs was the State, and we should make the best use of that authority.

The Government in India was favourably inclined towards legislation as proposed by Malabari. But it

was not prepared to move unless it was sure of popular support. Reformers did their best to goad it into sending memorials and holding meetings. But the anti-reformist agitation was far more vigorous. Big meetings were held in Bombay, Poona and other places. The opposition was overwhelming, and the Government dropped the proposal in 1886.

For four years after this, Malabari tried to obtain the support of influential persons in England: for, if Englishmen could be really moved by the distress, the Government in India might pass the act without caring much for popular opinion. In the meanwhile, Ranade had founded in 1887 the Indian National Social Conference, and had given his enthusiastic support in 1889 to Pandita Ramabai's Sharadasadan or widows' home.

Having influenced the opinion of many influential English friends for removing the suffering of girls of tender age by enacting the law as proposed, Malabari returned to the charge in 1890. A little before this, an admirer of Malabari wrote a book entitled *Status of Women in India* to which, at the request of the author, Ranade wrote a foreword. It was published in the *Sarvajanik Sabha Journal*. In it Ranade showed that throughout its history, Hindu society had been undergoing a change, which alone accounted for different views expressed in different texts written at different times. In general, Ranade thought, the Smritis

advocated the marriage of girls at 12 and consummation at 16. Ranade argued that the opponents of reforms, in seeking to perpetuate the current customs, were upholding evils which had crept in during later times, and that it was the reformers who were upholding the good traditions of the Shastras.

In 1890, an incident occurred which greatly impressed the Government. A small girl-wife was raped by her husband. Reformers of Bombay made an application to the Government requesting legislation. Malabari had returned from England to conduct his campaign anew. He held a meeting in Bombay, with Telang in the chair, to support the movement. The anti-reformers in Poona arranged a meeting to protest against it. The anti-reformers included two groups, the wholly orthodox group led by Ramdikshit Apte and Balasaheb Natu, and the advocates of limited reforms led by B. G. Tilak. The reformers tried to make a compromise with the Tilak group, but they failed. In a meeting of 5000 persons, the application urging the Government to drop the bill was read and supported by Tilak; but no definite resolution was passed. A subsequent attempt for a compromise also failed. Tilak's position was that there may be legislation but it should be binding only on those who were willing to be bound by it. Ranade held that his method of social reform would be ineffective. After the failure of these attempts for a compromise, Tilak ranged himself entirely on the side of the orthodox section.

The introduction of the Age of Consent Bill in the Legislative Council in 1891 gave rise to a nationwide agitation for a month or two. The papers were full of articles and reports of meetings discussing the topic. There were powerful speakers and writers on the side of the orthodox section; the greatest and most virulent of them in Maharashtra was B. G. Tilak, whose undoubted debating skill was excelled only by his sarcasm and scorn. Ranade, Telang and Bhandarkar argued the case for the reformers with deep scholarship and brilliant logic. Tilak organised a mammoth meeting in Poona denouncing the bill and its supporters. When reformers like Bhandarkar organised a meeting of those who were in favour of the Bill, there was slinging of mud and pelting of stones. In spite of strong popular opposition, the Age of Consent bill was passed in 1891. In Poona, agitation against the reformers became vulgar. During the ensuing Holi festival the supporters of the orthodox section took out a mock funeral procession of *the Reformer*, with reformist papers like the *Indu Prakash* and the *Sudharak* thrust into his hands, a garland of biscuits thrown round his neck, and a bottle of wine placed on his chest. This was the image of reformers created in the popular mind by their opponents.

Gradually the excitement over the Age of Consent Bill subsided. But a practical joke of an eccentric man, Gopalrao Joshi, once again brought about a confrontation between the reformers and the orthodox.

In October 1890, he persuaded the head of a Christian institution, the Panch Howd Mission, to invite some gentlemen for a lecture. About fifty of them attended, including, among others, Ranade and Tilak. Gopalrao Joshi had manoeuvred that after the lecture they should be offered tea and biscuits. The invitees were in a quandary. If they took tea, they would be boycotted for dining with Christians; if they did not, it would be discourtesy towards the host. Most of them only touched the cups to their lips. The matter seemed to have been forgotton. Six months later, Gopalrao published, in the orthodox paper, *Poone Vaibhav*, the full list of the names of these present at the tea in the Panch Howd Mission. Immediately there was commotion. Babasaheb Natu, the leader of the orthodox party, requested the Shankaracharya to punish the offenders. The Shankaracharya sent two representatives to enquire. Ranade was among the majority who accepted the authority of the Shankaracharya to hold the enquiry. The Shankaracharya's representatives held the accused guilty and prescribed the mild punishment that they should perform *prayashchitta*, i.e.. a purification ceremony. Tilak declared that he had already done *prayashchitta* at Banaras, and escaped the humiliation of having to suffer the nominal punishment in public. Ranade and others refused to do the *prayashchitta* because that would imply that they held it a sin to take

tea and biscuits with Christians. The orthodox people subjected them to a social boycott.

Actually, Ranade had not taken tea at all, and could have said so. When this course was urged on him by his sister, he said, "How can I do that? If I call myself one of the group, I must accept having done that which they have." He added, "I do not think there is anything holy in not having that tea, or sinful in having it. But I shall never approve of escaping from something in which my friends and constant companions have been implicated." In the course of a year or so, the boycott began to tell on the nerves of the reformers. One of Ranade's reformer friends was to have a marriage celebrated in his house, and his presence would have caused no end of embarrassment to the whole circle of relatives. He, with his wife and children, came away to Ranade's summer residence in Lonavala. But his old father felt sad that the son had become a stranger to the family. At the father's state of mind the son also became very miserable. To remove this mental agony, and at the request of several friends, Ranade underwent the purification ceremony. Extremist reformers criticised this action as a betrayal of the cause, and the orthodox gloated over the defeat of this stalwart.

Why did Ranade, the doyen of social reformers, on many such crucial occasions act as if he was not a reformer? Why, when his first wife died, instead of marrying a mature widow, did he take as wife a maid of

tender years? Why did he promise to his father that he would not again invite to dinner a friend who had married a widow? Why did he undergo a purification ceremony for having taken tea at the table of Europeans? Why did he at all accept the authority of the Shankaracharya to judge the social conduct of Hindus when he knew that the Shankaracharya was the presiding officer of the orthodox? He certainly did not do so because he was afraid of people and popular opinion, or because he was cowed down by social boycott. In most of these cases, one should note, somebody's feelings were hurt. The same tenderness of heart which made him sympathise with widows and ignorant women— was not his own sister among them?—made him incapable of sharply wounding the feelings of near relations and dear friends when a reformist action was involved. He retraced his steps when they caused feelings to be grievously hurt. As someone said, "He erred because his soul was gentle, his heart charitable." Moreover, his very philosophy of social reform required caution and moderation. About his acceptance of the Shankaracharya's right to hold enquiries, Ranade explained his position in a letter to Telang: "These authorities have their uses and no great or good purpose is served by ignoring them or treating them with contempt. There are some matters in which we must stand out, but there is no reason why we should stand out on all matters simply for the fun of the thing." His philosophy of social change in India was that all

change occurred by evolution and not by revolution. The protagonists of reform, therefore, must not be revolutionaries trying "to achieve the work of a century in a decade." They must "seek to turn the stream with a gentle bend here and a gentle bend there, to fructify the land; we cannot afford to dam it up altogether, or force it into a new channel." The genius of Hindu culture was its continuity. This means preservation as well as advancement.

It was because of this philosophy of social reform that Ranade placed some reliance on the method of shastric re-interpretation instead of taking his stand solely on reason and humanism. His radical followers criticised his mild position. At a time when social reform was galling to most people, only a mild position like Ranade's could hope to attract men to the benevolent cause.

The original intention of the founders of the Indian National Congress was to provide a platform for the discussion of social as well as political issues. Further discussions, in the first sessions, led to a decision to eliminate social reform from its purview. Ranade and his group, however, formed a kind of adjunct body to the Congress for social reform discussions, and this was the Indian National Social Conference. It met immediately following the annual session of the Congress in the same pandal. The first session of the Indian National Social Conference was held in Madras in 1887. As explained by Ranade, its purpose was to facilitate interchange of ideas

among social reform associations working in isolation in various parts of the country. "At the conference, views were exchanged, experience was communicated, varied information was focussed, additional light was thrown each year on many subjects, and unity of purpose was secured in the work of the different associations."

Reform associations of all localities and caste-groups sent annual reports of their work to the general secretary of the National Social Conference. The Conference gave inspiration to the workers of local societies; it formulated and suggested methods of work; and it gave encouragement to local societies by giving publicity to their achievements. Ranade was the central figure, indeed the soul, of this Conference. His chief associate in the Conference work was Divan Bahadur R. Raghunath Rao of Madras. They sent out letters to all places persuading people either to start reform associations if there were none already or to take up new reform programmes. At the annual Conference Ranade used to give an address. In it he summarised the social reform work done during the past year in all parts of the country, propounded the philosophy of reform, and stirred the enthusiasm and idealism of the workers by an eloquent appeal. Ranade delivered these addresses from 1887 to 1900. Sir Narayan Chandavarkar spoke of them as "these weighty and eloquent annual addresses, wise with the wisdom of the heart, powerful with all the power of his great intellect, majestic with

the majesty of his lofty and commanding personality." The choice of president and decisions on the agenda and on the resolutions were made by Ranade and a small group of supporters; this group was made up of leading reformers from the major regions. Improvement in women's conditions and status was the most general concern among reform associations. The Conference passed resolutions favouring raising the age of marriage, prohibition of imprisonment for women in conjugal rights cases, discouragement of marriages in which the differences in ages between parties were large, reduction in marriage expenses, remarriage of widows, prevention of disfigurement of child-widows, inter-caste marriages, discouragement of the dowry system, discouragement of polygamy and support of female education. In 1895, the Social Conference passed a resolution favouring the uplift of untouchables and succeeding conferences affirmed it. The caste system was generally condemned as unjust and unfair in various speeches and addresses. Some of the resolutions related not to nationwide social problems but to those tackled by small groups of reformers in their localities; for instance, supporting campaigns against alcohol consumption and dancing undertaken by Madras reformers, and deploring loud mourning and beating of the chest prevailing in the north-western part of the country. As has been said already, Ranade had the greatest share in selecting the topics and formulating the wording of the resolutions.

While thus giving a concrete shape to his concept of social reform, he emphasised that what was to be truly reformed was the whole personality, that it was the individual conscience which needed to be awakened and followed. Ranade said, "This or that particular reform...the removal of this or that particular defect or vice, is not and should not be the only end and aim of the agitation to improve our social condition. The end is to renovate, to purify, and also to perfect the whole man by liberating his intellect, elevating his standard of duty, and perfecting all his powers." Again, more specifically: "The issue is not this or that particular reform about which people have so much controversy but the general spirit of purity, justice, equality, temperance and mercy which should be infused into our minds and which should illumine our hearts."

10 THE MAN AND HIS PERSONAL RELATIONS

In some ways, Ranade was a quaint mixture of opposites. While his literary style had grace and grandeur, his personal appearance was far from captivating. Fastidious about facts and wording in his addresses and articles, he was most negligent in regard to his dress. Though tremendously impressed by the superiority of the West, his style of living was entirely Indian.

Srinivasa Sastri, who saw him for the first time in 1898, has observed: "He was not very tall, though his build was such that we thought he was rather tall. He had an ungainly look. There was a massiveness about his face which repelled rather than attracted. His voice was gruff." Sir Stanley Reed, the well-known journalist, says, "His physique was rugged, with one drooping and watery eye." He had a fair complexion and a broad

forehead; but in proportion to his body, the head was too big and in proportion to his face, the nose was too small. As for his dress, Sir Stanley says, "He dressed in anything, just a long black coat, frayed linen projecting from the sleeves, short ill-cut white trousers." His freely-grown moustache and a pugree on a shaven head were according to the Indian tradition. The oddities of his looks and dress, however, in no way prevented him from captivating the minds and hearts of men. "I can see him now as he appeared on the platform, leaning on a knotted stick, standing in silent thought for near ten minutes, completely indifferent to his audience. Then he began, slowly at first, gradually warming to his subject and spoke for an hour and a half on the Golden Age of India. Without a note, without a pause, he poured forth a stream of learning and sound sense, holding his audience enthralled, though he had none of the art of an orator." Srinivasa Sastri described the effect: "Soon, however, things seemed to change. One good remark caught our attention; we strained our ears. Lo and behold! the voice gained distinctness, the sentiments captured our fancy and, as if by magic, the face became bright with intelligence. Half a dozen sentences, and our eyes were fixed on the speaker. Thereafter, all through the speech he held us as in a spell. I thought I was listening to a superior being, all aglow with wisdom which seemed a part of him—so easily, so naturally, so unostentatiously did it keep flowing into me. There was

pin-drop silence in the hall. I don't think the audience laughed or cheered once. If they did, I didn't hear it." Of Ranade's literary style, Sastri says, "It is weighty without being ponderous, profound without being mystic, edifying without being homiletic."

Unlike that of educated men of his times, Ranade's style of living was entirely unaffected by Western influence. He did not even use a pen with a nib. He sat on a mat cross-legged, placed his papers on his thighs, and wrote on them with a reed pen. Sometimes he used a low table on which he could place the writing material while sitting on the mat. He disposed of all his work in this way, including the writing of judgements, letters and articles. In this posture he also received visitors, if any arrived while he was at work. There was also, in his house, an old-fashioned piece of furniture peculiar to western India—a swinging-wooden board. It was usual for Ranade to sit on it, with a large cushion behind him as a support for his back. Any caller could come and sit next to him on his swinging-board. Without any formalities, anyone could meet him, though his official status and position in public life entitled him to expect visitors to fix appointments beforehand.

In Ranade's household there were some thirty or forty persons, perhaps more. The most dominating among them was Ranade's widowed sister, Durgatai; she was very obstinate and very conservative in her views. She was also hot-tempered. Ranade's aunt, i.e., his paternal uncle's

wife, was the eldest among the ladies; Ranade looked upon her as a mother, and never talked back at her even when, in fits of anger, she spoke offending words. There was also Ranade's step-mother. Poor students would, after attending to their studies, do odd jobs like getting vegetables and keeping accounts. The household had a tradition of living in ample comfort, and this tradition, which came through Ranade's father, was kept up. There was no stinting on food; snacks in the morning and afternoon and two sumptuous meals were the usual fare. This was what Ranade could well afford, his salary being more than Rs. 800 per month. But this only means that Ranade was keeping up the family tradition which was within his means; it does not imply that he was pleasure-loving. In fact, personally he was indifferent to pleasures; for, he was never upset if, at any time, any of the comforts to which he was accustomed was not available. His mind was always filled with better things than personal physical pleasures. Almost all in his family were opposed to social reform; Ranade and his wife were the only reformers and his step-brothers were the only sympathisers. It is not difficult to imagine what complications must have arisen in Ranade's domestic life in this situation. In a letter to Malabari in 1884, Ranade wrote, "God only knows that in our households we are perpetually at war with our dearest and nearest. We struggle and strive to do our best, and have perforce to stop at many points, when we fear the strain will cause a rupture."

Ranade had a capacity for deep friendship. To the very orthodox mind, the social reformer was half a Christian; yet an orthodox friend of Ranade's, one Ganesh Hari Sathe, while on his death-bed, entrusted his only son to his care. Respecting the deceased friend's wishes, Ranade trained the boy in orthodox Hindu ritual and sent him to the Vedashastrottejak Sabha for the purpose. When the boy was attacked by the plague, though the family shifted to a safe place, Ranade insisted on staying back to look after him; when entreated not to risk danger, he replied, "My dear friend did not commit his child to my charge so that I may desert him in a moment like this." Another instance is that of his friendship with Shankar Pandurang Pandit. He was Ranade's contemporary at college and a co-worker in the cause of women's education. When he came to Bombay for medical treatment, Ranade accommodated him and his family in his own house. In spite of treatment, Pandit's health continued to deteriorate, and he was writhing with pain. Ranade's wife writes, "My husband would talk to Pandit very encouragingly; but when he left him and came to his room, his mind would all the while be filled with anxiety. He would often sigh sadly and exclaim, "Ram, Ram!"... My husband would frequently step into Pandit's room quietly, watch if he was asleep, and see what his condition was. He often spent sleepless nights worrying about him." Pandit passed away a few months later.

Ranade's wife, Ramabai, was also his devoted disciple. She chose to follow him in the path of religious and social reform, for which, for several years, she had to suffer ridicule and hostility all day long from the members of the household. Following her husband, she also refrained from answering back. This suffering and forbearance endeared her to her husband all the more, and the tenderness of their mutual love is apparent to the readers of *Ranade: His Wife's Reminiscences.* In the course of years, Ranade transformed Ramabai from an illiterate timid girl of eleven into a mature capable lady, who, after his demise, carried on his work in the field of women's uplift through the Seva Sadan.

Ranade had quite a number of intimate friends. Among those senior to him in age, he had great respect for Dadabhai Naoroji, of whom he used to speak in terms which a pupil in India uses in speaking of a teacher. Gopal Hari Deshmukh and Vishnushastri Pandit initiated him in the social reform work. Among his contemporaries at the Elphinstone College, Bhandarkar the famous orientalist and leader of the Prarthana Samaj and social reform, B. M. Wagle, N. M. Paramanand and W. A. Modak, all of whom were Prarthana Samajists, were his close friends. So was Ganesh Wasudeo Joshi, the 'Sarvajanik Kaka'. Ganesh Vyankatesh Joshi the economist was Ranade's collaborator in economic thinking, while K.T. Telang, the brilliant lawyer of Bombay and a scholar of Sanskrit, History and Economics, was his co-leader

in social reform. Ranade referred to their moderate creed of social reform as 'the Telang School of thought'. Ranade's nationwide contacts in politics and social reform work brought him many friends from other provinces too, among whom mention may be made of Divan Bahadur Raghunath Rao of Madras, the General Secretary of the National Social Conference in its early years.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale was Ranade's disciple. The way in which Ranade, as preceptor, guided, instructed and trained Gokhale, and the manner in which the latter reverentially accepted the discipline imposed by the preceptor are unique in the history of political work in India. Gokhale, a professor in the Fergusson College of Poona, was introduced to Ranade about 1889 as a promising young man with potentialities of becoming a public worker. Gokhale, a young man of twenty-three, willingly carried out tasks set to him by Ranade, such as preparing abstracts of documents or reports on public questions, preparing drafts of memorials to be sent by the Sarvajanik Sabha to the Government and the like. The discussions Gokhale had with Ranade were an excellent form of training. Without ever complaining and without the slightest reluctance Gokhale carried out the instructions of the master, so that the latter was satisfied. Ranade inculcated in his disciple the critical faculty, a balanced mind, the capacity to see both sides of a question, industry in going through all relevant

facts and figures, and the appropriate style of writing. "There must be vigour in thought, not in language," Ranade taught Gokhale.

The bitter relations between Ranade and Tilak, and consequently between the groups led by these two, were very unfortunate for the public life of Maharashtra. The bitterness could have been avoided; but the conflict was inevitable. For, Ranade and Tilak had different approaches towards national problems. They represented different types of nationalism. Though both held that India was a nation, in fact nationalism in the sense of a consciousness of belonging to each other was only in the process of development; and since nationalism everywhere is the result of artificial stimulation, it was possible to shape it in India according to different concepts of a nation. For Ranade, British rule was a God-given opportunity for India, after a sleep of centuries, to quicken its pace towards a goal of immense material prosperity and moral perfection; for, Britain and the West had already taken great strides towards it. For Tilak, it was an intolerable humiliation inflicted on the people, and its overthrow must be the first concern of every Indian. For Ranade, the forces making for India-wide unity were the beneficent results of British rule—they were unknown before, namely, an administrative system strictly bound by well thought out rules, a judicial system bound by laws, modern means of communications like the railways and the telegraph,

the English language and the knowledge of Western culture and science which is conveyed by it, and the economic structure modelled after the British. For Tilak, the unifying factor was pride of religion and culture, which alone was capable of generating the emotion of patriotism in India. Both believed in a historical basis of Indian nationalism, but there was a difference. Ranade said that Indians represented "a continuity of creed, of traditions, of literature, of philosophy, of modes of life and forms of thought, which are particular to this land"; but he also held that this continuity was supervised by and under the severe discipline of Providence, which sometimes brought on the rule of foreigners from whom the nation learnt some virtues peculiar to them. Tilak would have none of these fanciful interpretations; he believed that our country was inherently great as the glorious history of its past amply showed, and on regaining independence it would once again capture its lost greatness. Ranade was opposed to Tilak's idea of making a single religious creed the basis of nationalism, even if that creed was Hinduism professed by three-fourths of the population. Ranade said, "In the modern conditions of life, the India that is to be born will have no room for mere distinctions of race, creed, colour. We aspire all of us to be Indians first and Indians last, over every other condition which has separated us so long and made a united India impossible." Ranade held that in exceptionally important items of social reform

such as the one involved in the Age of Consent Bill, the help of law and the State should be taken; Tilak could not for a moment forget the foreign character of the regime in India and thought it galling that the State should interfere in the people's social customs. Ranade regarded social reform as urgent as political reform; Tilak held that it could wait.

It is now easy to see that Ranade's anxiety not to injure Indo-British relations was interpreted by Tilak as unpatriotic, that Ranade's earnest efforts to remove evil customs were construed as aiding the invasion of British culture, and that Ranade's solicitude for harmonious relations between the Hindu and Muslim communities even when the Muslims were aggressive was interpreted as lack of courage.

In the context of the times, Tilak was right about the potentialities of religion as a basis of patriotism. This new type of nationalism, led in other provinces by Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal and Aravinda Ghosh, was far deeper in its intensity and far wider in its extent. Ranade could never produce anything like it. Tilak's nationalism inspired heroic deeds. But what is Hindu religion? If religion is to be made to rouse the national sentiment, popular notion of it has to be respected. And this is what Tilak did. For the sake of religion-based nationalism, Tilak joined the orthodox in obstructing plans of social reform, even though, on his own nationalist grounds, he approved of some of

its items. Besides this alliance with orthodoxy, another unfortunate feature of Maharashtra politics was the vitriolic, vituperative style of Tilak's writings and speeches. Tilak succeeded in undermining the esteem in which Ranade and the reformers were held in the literate class in Maharashtra; they became objects of ridicule and hate. But the literates constituted a small minority of the whole people. Moreover, the poison did not extend beyond Maharashtra.

In 1893, Ranade was appointed a judge of the High Court, and he shifted to Bombay. However, in Poona the group of public men which held him in high esteem continued to seek his advice. The first difference in politics between the Ranade group and the Tilak group arose over the attitude to be taken about the Hindu-Muslim riots which occurred in 1893. Communal clashes in Junagad created a tension in Bombay, where Muslims started a riot, breaking temples and attacking Hindus ferociously. The latter retaliated. The tension then spread to Poona and other places. Tilak wrote strongly condemning the Muslim community and the Government which, by being partial to it, emboldened the Muslims. Ranade agreed with the analysis but thought it tactless to discuss the episode, as the hurling of accusations would only add to the tension. When the Poona Hindus led by Tilak called a meeting of Hindus to express their feelings, Ranade and Pherozeshah Mehta from Bombay asked him to drop the idea. Tilak

was enraged. "From where has Ranade obtained the monopoly of wisdom?" Tilak asked defiantly in the public meeting. Tilak proceeded to say that the leaders deserved the people's homage only so long as they did not differ much from the people, and Ranade's views were not the people's views.

Just about this time Tilak hit upon the idea of organising the Ganesh festival as a public function, to be utilised for developing a sense of unity and political consciousness. This religious-cum-political movement caught on. The Ranade party disapproved of the whole approach and kept itself strictly aloof. This resulted in widening the rift between them and the Tilakites.

Tilak stood as a candidate for election to the Bombay Legislative Council against two candidates, one of whom was supported by the Ranade party, and won the election. The two parties then contested for power in the Sarvajanik Sabha, and in 1895 the Tilak party captured it. In the ensuing Diwali vacation, in order to find scope for Gokhale and other members of the Ranade party so that they may express their own views and work according to their views, Ranade founded the Deccan Sabha. At this, Tilak was furious, saying that, like Bacon, Ranade was learned yet mean-minded.

Tilak then sought to deal a blow to the National Social Conference into which Ranade had poured out his soul. He wanted to bring to an end a great facility which it had been enjoying, namely, the arrangement

that it would be held in the pandal erected by the Indian National Congress. In 1895, the Congress was to be held in Poona. Tilak, Gokhale and Gadgil were Secretaries of the Reception Committee. They went around collecting funds. The orthodox group in Poona led by Balasaheb Natu and S. V. Date began an agitation for withholding donations unless an undertaking was given that the Social Conference would not be allowed to be held in the Congress pandal. At first Tilak only agreed with them in principle and continued to collect donations without preconditions; yet he addressed a public meeting joining the orthodox party in their demand. He then resigned the Secretaryship which hindered him from giving full support to them. S.V. Date, a rich, stout man, gave a veiled threat that if the Social Conference was held in the same pandal, his people would burn it. One leading social reformer, as he was returning home one night, was severely beaten up. Tilak sent an appeal to the Congress Committees of all places urging that, in committee meetings as well as public meetings, they should pass resolutions opposing the holding of the Social Conference in the Congress pandal, and forward the resolutions to the Congress Working Committee. Several Congress Committees did so. As a result of this pressure and intervention of influential friends, Ranade, as Secretary of the Social Conference, announced that it would not be held in the Congress pandal. The Tilak party and the orthodox party thus scored a victory.

From the following year onwards, the Social Conference again continued to be held in the Congress pandal. In no other province were the anti-reform groups so determined or so organised as in Maharashtra. Tilak had been most discourteous towards Ranade. After the passing of the Age of Consent Bill, Tilak had written that Ranade, Bhandarkar and Telang were not leaders of the people but their enemies: "They must be cut off, like a diseased limb of the body." At one place Tilak described these three leaders as "wicked men adorned with learning." In spite of such strong provocation, Ranade never uttered a single word derogatory to Tilak. On the contrary, Ranade paid compliments to Tilak on his sincerity and zeal. Writing to a friend in Madras about Tilak's bitter and acrimonious opposition to the holding of the Social Conference, Ranade simply said, "It is a genuine struggle between earnest men."

In his better moments Tilak expressed great esteem for Ranade. Controverting an argument of Gokhale's that there was intellectual degeneration among university graduates because they did not have among them giants like Ranade and Bhandarkar, Tilak said, "Can we expect a peer of Ranade to be born within a hundred years after him?" Deep down in his heart Tilak had reverence for Ranade. It came out in Tilak's obituary article in the *Kesari*. He wrote: "Poona in the earlier half of the nineteenth century was like a corpse... and the same was the condition of Maharashtra as a

whole... Men were bewildered. They were completely at a loss to know what they should do; they even did not know whether the present conditions were better or worse than the past... Maharashtra had become a cold lump of flesh and bones. If any person can be said to have consciously thought, day and night, of how to give warmth to it so that it may come to life; if any person can be said to have undertaken the task of bringing it to life by all possible remedies and in all possible ways and if any person can be said to have strained every nerve to this end, that person is Ranade alone."

11 AS HIGH COURT JUDGE

Ranade was appointed a judge of the High Court of Bombay in 1893. This brought to an end the long period of his residence in Poona, continuous for twenty-two years except for a short break. Though he made his debut in public life at Bombay as a social and religious reformer, it was at Poona that he had extended his activities and also their scope, until he developed into one of the most highly respected leaders of the country. Leaving Poona, therefore, was an important event in his life. On this occasion he set apart Rs. 25,000 and appointed trustees to administer this fund for the benefit of some societies. His appointment as a High Court judge did not in any way abate his zeal, and he continued to be active in all fields, especially in the sphere of social reform. In fact, he added to his spheres

of work by undertaking historical research and reform in university education.

Politics

Soon after Ranade left Poona to take up his duties as a High Court judge at Bombay, political differences arose between the Tilak and Ranade groups. First, there was difference about the attitude towards the Hindu-Muslim riots of 1893; next, there was the attitude of studied indifference of the Ranade group towards the Ganesh festival, which Tilak regarded as a valuable public activity; then there was a contest between Tilak and a candidate of the Ranade group for election to the Bombay Legislative Council. Tilak's criticism of the British rule was too virulent from the standpoint of the Ranade group. The divergence of their views on political matters made it impossible to formulate agreed resolutions and memoranda. The Sarvajanik Sabha, of which Ranade had been the soul, was captured by the Tilak group. Ranade and his group had no choice but to secede and form another association, and this they did by founding the Deccan Sabha in 1896. These developments have been already narrated in an earlier chapter. What needs to be noted here is a significant passage from the manifesto written by Ranade, declaring the principles and aims of the new association. He was called upon to justify its formation by showing exactly where it differed from the existing one. He summed up this difference in

two words, 'liberalism' and 'moderation'; these were so apt that the all-India party which differed from the new nationalist party of Tilak, Lajpat Rai, Aravinda Ghosh and Bipin Chandra Pal was known as either the 'Moderate' or the 'Liberal' party. The philosophy behind the Deccan Sabha's attitude has been stated by Ranade in these memorable words: "The spirit of liberalism implies a freedom from race and creed prejudices and a steady devotion to all that seeks to do justice between man and man, giving to the rulers the loyalty that is due to the law they are bound to administer, but securing at the same time to the ruled the equality which is their right under the law. Moderation implies the condition of never vainly aspiring after the impossible or after too remote ideals, but striving each day to take the next step in the order of natural growth, by doing the work that lies nearest to hand in a spirit of compromise and fairness. After all, political activities are chiefly of value not for the particular results achieved, but for the process of political education which is secured by exciting interest in public matters and promoting the self-respect and self-reliance of citizenship." These principles are obviously relevant in the context of the political life of India towards the end of the nineteenth century; they are not, and are not meant to be, of universal application. The implication of this passage was that the group in power in the Sarvajanik Sabha was not liberal and not moderate, in the sense defined in it.

Social Reform

Ranade's addresses at the National Social Conference, which he delivered every year from 1887 to 1900, were always profound and inspiring. Prof. Kellock says, "Reading the Conference addresses one feels as if one were watching an able general directing a campaign. We see him keeping his eye always on the ultimate goal and judging every apparent success or failure in relation to that goal. We see him pressing his forces onwards and yet taking care that impatience and over-enthusiasm do not carry the line too far forward."

It is, however, in his address at the Hislop College, Nagpur, that he gave the clearest analysis of the techniques of the social reform movement in India. He enumerated four methods in the order of preference according to him. The first was the method of interpreting the old texts in a new way so as to support reforms. He cited the examples of Bhandarkar and Dayanand Saraswati as using these methods, modestly omitting his own name. The chief advantage of this method was that it made reforms acceptable to the masses, since it made them feel that they were not confronted with innovations. The second was the method of appealing to the conscience; it involved persuading men to promise, to take pledges, to act according to the dictates of moral principles in spite of unjust and baneful customs. The third method was to enforce reform by means of penalties, imposed either by caste organisations or the State. This method

was justified because it implied a constraint imposed by the wise upon the ignorant for the ultimate good of all; but since it involved coercion it should be used only in extreme cases where the first two methods had proved ineffective. Abolition of Sati, permitting widow-remarriages, banning intercourse with child-wives or banning child-marriages were such extreme cases. The fourth method was the one called by him the method of rebellion by which he meant seceding from the Hindu community and forming another camp on a religious basis of believers in reformed practices. Though this method was followed by the Brahmo Samajists in Bengal, Ranade did not approve of it. This method left the vast majority unaffected. "The true test of progress," he said, "must be seen in signs which show that this vast mass of humanity is being vivified."

It was only in extreme cases, when the cruelty of a custom was clear and when other methods involving persuasion had proved ineffective, that Ranade favoured the method of legislation by the State. And yet it was on this very issue of State legislation in social matters that Ranade had to fight the case for it against formidable opposition by Tilak and his party. Ranade's exposition of the case in 1885 was built on very sound arguments. First, to the objection that the State was interfering in customs which were religious no less than social, Ranade's reply was that there were precedents, such as Government action against the rites of Sati,

hook-swinging and the like, and in behalf of vaccination and sanitation, and nobody objected to them. Regulation of marriage was in every country a part of national jurisprudence, and, therefore, legislation enabling widows to remarry and banning child-marriages was within the legitimate sphere of the State. To the objection that since widows or infant brides did not complain the State should not interfere, Ranade replied, "Perhaps the worst effect of injustice is that it depresses the down-trodden victims to such an extent that they lick the hand of the oppressor." Ranade's main case was against the proposition that help from a 'foreign government' was demoralising. In reply to this proposition, Ranade advanced many arguments. The 'foreign government' was not at all interested in our reform; it would rather leave us demoralised and deformed. If Hindus did not persuade the Government to interfere and to help reform, and instead spurned such help if offered, they would shut out this very useful agency and fall behind other Indian communities which had received it, such as the Parsis and the Christians. Further, Ranade argued that legislation for social reform would not at all impose foreign rule but would in fact re-impose social regulations which once did exist in Hindu society and which had disappeared owing to the "predominance of barbarous influences and the intolerance of ruthless, conquerers" in the recent past. Finally, Ranade said that in regard to proposed legislation "the initiative is

to be our own," and "all that is sought at the hands of foreigners is to give to the sense of the most enlightened men in the community...the force and the sanction of law."

A theoretical question which was raised in the course of the controversy between the reformers and the anti-reformers was: Should social reform precede political reform, or *vice versa?* One view was stated by C. Sankaran Nair as President of the Congress in 1897, affirming that "Great as is the necessity of British rule for the political emancipation of our country, even greater is the necessity for social and religious reform." His presumption that the British rule helped political emancipation was typical of moderate politicians; and his statement implied that even moderate politics was less important than social reform. R. G. Bhandarkar asserted that "without the acquisition of certain virtues and without a reform of our social institutions, real political advance is impossible." Other supporters of this view were Narendra Nath Sen, Lala Baijnath, and Viresalingam Pantalu, men coming from different parts of India. At the other extreme was the view of Tilak and his group who repudiated social reform, partly because it was a liability to any political movement seeking mass support. Ranade held the middle position stressing the equal importance of both, and considering the two kinds of advance as inseparable. "You cannot have a good social system when you find yourself low in the

scale of political rights, nor can you be fit to exercise political rights and privileges unless your social system is based on reason and justice..." It is a mistaken view which divorces considerations political from social and economic, and no man can be said to realise his duty in one aspect who neglects his duties in the other directions.

Historical Research

After coming to Bombay, Ranade undertook to write a history of the Marathas. His original intention was to write it in collaboration with his friend, K. T. Telang. In accordance with their agreement, Telang collected material and, on its basis, published a brochure entitled *Gleanings from the Maratha Chronicles.* Owing to the premature death of Telang, it was left to Ranade to carry on the work alone. The book, *Rise of the Maratha Power,* was the result. The book was published in 1900. Besides, Ranade also read papers on 'Introduction to the Peshwa Diaries' and 'Currencies and Mints under Maratha Rule'.

Ranade's historical works were in the nature of research. They contained originality of sources used as well as originality of interpretation. The new source-material was the Maratha Chronicles or *Bakhars,* locked up in archives and ignored by historians. To Ranade and Telang goes the credit of first obtaining permission to use them and later enabling someone to publish them.

Grant Duff, who was the only prominent historian who had written about the Marathas, had mainly depended on Persian sources, and since their Muslim writers had a bias against their adversaries, the bias against the Marathas was carried over into the writings of Grant Duff also. Ranade undertook to write a new and comprehensive history of the Marathas from an Indian point of view on the basis of the Maratha Chronicles.

Ranade's new interpretation of Maratha history is stated by him in the form of a few propositions: (1) The immediate predecessors of the British rulers were not the Mahomedans but the Hindu rulers, notably the Marathas, who had successfully thrown off the Mahomedan yoke, extended their dominion and influence throughout India, and made or unmade the Emperors of Delhi. (2) Maratha rule was not the work of one strong man or a succession of gifted men but was founded on a national consciousness in the hearts of the people of Maharashtra. It was the upheaval of the whole population. (3) The political revolution which established Maratha rule was preceded and to some extent caused by a religious and social upheaval. Like the Protestant Reformation in Europe in the 16th century, there was a religious, social and literary reformation in Maharashtra in the 15th and 16th centuries, protesting against forms, ceremonies and caste distinctions and emphasising purity of heart and the law of love as the essence of religion. This religious revival also was the

work of the masses, led by saints belonging to the low classes such as tailors, carpenters, potters, gardeners, barbers and mahars; Brahmins too were among them. (4) Maratha history is a history of confederated States, not that of one central power. Shivaji had a council of eight ministers who were more than councillors—they were civil and military leaders. There were many centres of vitality, and as long as they were animated by a common purpose and a central idea, their power was irresistible. (5) These confederacy arrangements enabled the Marathas to outlive and grow stronger from the very reverses they had sustained during crises, such as, when Shivaji was imprisoned at Delhi: or when the Battle of Panipat apparently destroyed all chances of regaining ascendancy. (6) Shivaji was, far from being a leader of brigands as depicted by Grant Duff, an inspiring leader of men. In Ranade's words, "He attracted towards himself all that was hopeful and inspiring in the land, without distinction of class or caste or creed." Again, "Religious fervour, almost at white heat, bordering on the verge of self-abnegation, a daring and adventurous spirit born of a confidence that a higher power than man's protected him and his work, the magnetism of superior genius which binds men together and leads them to victory, a rare insight into the real needs of the times and a steadfastness of purpose which no adverse turn of fortune could conquer, a readiness and resourcefulness rarely met with either in Indian

or European history, a true patriotism which was far in advance of the time and sense of justice tempered with mercy—these were the sources of strength that enabled Shivaji to sow the seeds of a power which accomplished in the hands of his successors all that he had planned out..." Ranade, through his historical works, along with Telang and Bhandarkar, laid the foundations of historical research in Maharashtra and himself rehabilitated the character of Shivaji and the empire that he had founded.

University Affairs

On coming to Bombay, Ranade was made a member of several bodies of the Bombay University. He attempted to introduce two reforms in university education, and though he did not succeed in his efforts in his life-time, the case he had made out for them was very strong and when the obstinacy of the European officials got weakened, his proposals found acceptance. One of the reforms was the re-introduction of Indian languages in the curricula of various examinations. In 1894, Ranade got the Syndicate and the Faculty to agree, but the Senate turned down the proposal. The objections were puerile. Encouragement to Indian languages would cause ill-feelings between castes and religions; Ranade simply said 'No'. Introducing additional papers in Indian languages would increase the load of studies; Ranade said a book or two in the language in which a

student spoke to his parents, brothers and sisters could not possibly be felt as a burden. It was queer that Indian graduates who could speak in public in English could not do so in their mother-tongue. It was not proper to call a man a Gujarati, a Maharashtrian or a Kannadiga if he could not speak the particular language. These arguments were of no avail. Then Ranade wrote five articles on the promotion of the Marathi language which were published in several journals. In consultation with other learned friends, he prepared a list of good books of a high standard in Marathi to refute the objection that there were no good books in Marathi. After so much preparation, the proposal was again introduced. By the time Marathi was included as a subject for the M.A., Ranade had passed away.

According to Ranade, one of the reasons why graduates died early was the overwhelming burden of studies. Ranade introduced two proposals to remove the needless burden—abolition of one of the two intermediate examinations before the B.A., and exemption from re-appearing in that subject in which a failed student got forty-five per cent marks. For arguing in favour of these proposals, he had taken great pains to collect precedents from foreign universities. However, he did not succeed.

The Vice-Chancellor of the University, Mr. Justice Candy, said at the Ranade Memorial meeting: "In my capacity as Chairman of the Syndicate, experience of

Ranade's work was constantly coming before me. When any awkward question came up, at once everyone's eyes would turn in the direction of Ranade. There was no other who could show the way out of a difficulty like him and we used to regard him as our *guru*... He had the patience of the saints; he was entirely free from guile or hypocrisy and everyone was spontaneously drawn to him."

Judicial Work

To say that Ranade was a highly competent and a strictly impartial judge is no compliment; indeed, it is a superfluous statement. All High Court judges are supposed to be that. But knowledgeable persons speak of some special characteristics of his. Modern Hindu law is a superstructure raised on old foundations and every judge who has sat on the High Court Bench has contributed his mite to it; Ranade's contribution to this branch of law has been both valuable in quality and large in quantity. Ranade's specially strong point was his intimate knowledge of life in the mofussil, which most High Court judges did not have, and which Ranade had obtained as a Special Judge while supervising the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act in Poona. Moreover, he was extraordinarily painstaking; he acquainted himself with the contents of every document and the deposition of every witness, and

brought to bear on the facts his vast learning and fine acumen.

Religion

All along Ranade had been an active follower of the reformed religion, the Prarthana Samaj. He used to attend the weekly prayer-meetings of the Samaj regularly. At each meeting, besides prayer, there used to be a religious discourse by one of the members, and Ranade was quite often called upon to give one. The purpose of these discourses or sermons was to generate the feeling of bliss that came from a thought of the divine, nourishing the innate tendencies towards good. For the text of the discourses in earlier days, Ranade used to select passages from the Bible; after going to Bombay he generally based them on Hindu books, such as the *Upanishads,* the *Bhagawatgita* and the works of Marathi saints. "I have never heard anything richer than some of his sermons," said Gokhale. N. G. Chandavarkar says, "His sermons are unequalled in the qualities of eloquence, sincerity and devotion invoking God's mercy." Ranade followed the path of devotion or *Bhaktimarga* which, he argued, was the easiest of the four, namely, *Yoga, Dnyana, Karma* and *Bhakti*. Besides these sermons, Ranade wrote two articles on religious subjects, namely, 'R. B. Dadoba Pandurang and the Swedenborg School' (1878) and 'Butler's Method of Ethics—Professor Selby's Notes' (1882). In Poona in

1891, a very learned Christian missionary named Dr. Penticost delivered a series of fifteen lectures, the purport of which was that Christianity was the best faith. On the last day, at the request of friends, Ranade thanked the lecturer on behalf of the citizens. This was a memorable speech; Ranade spoke for three-quarters of an hour, surveying all religious faiths, critically examining their contributions, and concluding that Hinduism, divested of its excrescences, deserved to be the faith of all mankind.

After coming to Bombay, Ranade gave two important lectures on religion entitled 'Hindu Protestantism' (1895) and 'Philosophy of Indian Theism' (1896). In his 'Hindu Protestantism' Ranade put forth the thesis that the Bhagawat Dharma, especially as expounded by saints in the late medieval age, "may be safely described as Protestant Hinduism." The lives and teachings of saints like Dnyandev, Namdeo, Eknath, Tukaram, Ramdas, Nanak and Kabir form a protest against the unhealthy tendencies of their times. They protested against the supremacy of the Sanskrit language and enriched the vernacular languages by writing or composing verses in them. They protested against the tendency to exaggerate the importance of rites and ceremonies. They struggled against orthodoxy and the supremacy of the Brahmins. They raised a protest against the Yoga system which involved austerities. They protested against the rigidity of

caste rules. They protested against polytheism; they were all worshippers of one God, whatever be the name by which each worshipped him. They protested against the complexities about concepts of God and proclaimed that God was a loving God, caring for the meanest of His creatures with a mother's and father's love.

The essential idea of Theism is that God is a unitary, personal being who is the source of creation and the ground of the physical world, immanent in nature (i.e., processes in nature involving continuous divine activity) and at the same time, transcendent to it (i.e., distinct from nature and never exhausted by it). Ranade, in his lecture on the 'Philosophy of Indian Theism', surveyed all the different philosophies of religion, Western as well as Indian, showing that the philosophy of Theism was the most satisfactory explanation of the problem of existence. Three postulates underlying all religious thought are 'I', 'Non-I', and 'Supreme Existence which synthesises both'. Ranade divides the philosophies of religion—materialism, idealism and others—into four groups, three unduly emphasising one or another of these postulates and the fourth giving up all speculation in despair. He briefly points out the inadequacies of the systems in each group and demonstrates the soundness of Theism. He then points out the similarities between the Theistic interpretations of Christianity and the Theistic systems of Hindu philosophy, such as the

Bhagawat Dharma. In the end he mentions some special characteristics of the Indian system.

The Promised Land

Notwithstanding his moderatism, notwithstanding his principle of "never vainly aspiring after the impossible or after too remote ideals," Ranade was a dreamer. He had a vision, albeit a distant one, of an India great and strong. He said, "With a liberated manhood, with buoyant hope, with a faith that never shirks duty, with a sense of justice that deals fairly with all, with unclouded intellect and powers fully cultivated and, lastly, with a love that overleaps all bounds, renovated India will take her proper rank among the nations of the world, and be master of the situation and of her own destiny. This is the goal to be reached – this is the promised land. Happy are they who see it in distant vision, happier they who are permitted to work and clear the way on to it, happiest they who live to see it with their own eyes and tread upon the holy soil."

12

CONCLUSION

Ranade's daily routine at Bombay has been recorded by Mrs Ramabai Ranade in her *Reminiscences.* He would sleep for only four and a half hours. Getting up at 3:30, for two hours he would meditate upon God and recite some *abhangas* or devotional hymns of Tukaram and Sanskrit religious *shlokas.* From 5:30 in the morning to 11 in the night he was completely engaged in his High Court work or public work. Ranade had left most of his family at Poona and was living at Bombay with his wife; they had, with them, also a niece and a nephew, whom they were bringing up as their children, not having any of their own.

But about a couple of years after he became a judge of the High Court, Ranade's health began to deteriorate. Yet he continued to work hard. In 1898-99, he was writing

his book on Maratha history and also a series of articles for *The Times of India* on the Indian sugar industry; Prof. Kale, who was then his writer, informs us that he obtained sixty books in order to write this series. In 1900, Ranade was seized by an illness; every night, between 10 and 10:30, he would feel numbness in his hands and feet; there would be a twitching of nerves within and he would feel suffocated with an obstruction in the chest. From the following morning he could follow his usual routine, but each attack left him weaker. Ranade was continuing his work and activities as before. He wrote two papers based on the *Peshwas' Diaries*. In November, he unveiled a portrait of Dadabhai Naoroji in the Framji Cowasji Institute; this was his last public lecture. He wrote the essay to be read out as his annual address at the Social Conference. The illness went on increasing. Owing to its fatal nature, the doctors avoided telling him the name of it. Characteristically, he got some books from the Medical College, studied them, and discovered the name. It was *Angina Pectoris*. He surprised the doctors by telling it to them. On January 16, 1901, his magnificent and noble life came to an end.

Ranade was essentially a religious man, a man of God. His eminence in different fields—as a revered statesman, an original economist, a philosopher and organiser of social reform, and a historian of uncommon vision—was but the emanation of his deeply religious spirit. He began his day with contemplation of God. His

close associate, G. W. Joshi, said, "He always seemed to feel that he was in the presence of the Almighty, a humble servant doing his appointed task as best as he could, and with the light of faith that was vouchsafed to him." He had all the attributes of a man of God: utter, absolute unselfishness; humility; a quiet cheerfulness regardless of difficulties or failures; forgiveness; and readiness to help all who sought his help.

For such a man official honours could not mean much; nevertheless they came to him. The title 'Rao Bahadur' was conferred on him in 1872; he was appointed Law Member in the Bombay Legislative Council in 1885; he was made a C.I.E. in 1887; and he was appointed a judge of the Bombay High Court in 1893. But the country honoured him far more, for reasons other than his official status.

Next to being a man of religion, Ranade was a patriot. He looked upon his official duties mainly as a means of rendering service to his countrymen. Every moment of his day was occupied by thoughts about the country. He did not spend any time in recreation or idle gossip. His utter dedication to the service of the country was an inspiration to his contemporaries, young and old.

With his brilliant intellect he acquired mastery over all social sciences as they stood in his day, made an acute analysis of the social, political and economic problems of the community, and became the light and guide to all earnest workers. By participating in the founding

of the Indian National Congress, he contributed to the organisation of political activities on a national scale, and he did the same with regard to social reform work by founding the National Social Conference. With great erudition he put forth the view that, howsoever established, the contact with Britain offered an immense opportunity for national progress in all directions, and on his part he laboured hard for it. He never shied from attacking the faults of the British administrators when he found them, but he did not hesitate to give them credit when it was due. One of the pioneers among writers on the economic problems of India, he provided a scientific justification for an Indian point of view, and is truly called the Father of Indian Economics. He also provided a philosophy to the work in the field of social reform. He laid the foundations of historical research in Maharashtra and, as historian, he conclusively proved Shivaji's innate nobility of character.

The worth of his personality and the significance of his work were well described by Gokhale in his speech in 1904. "Mr. Ranade was a pre-eminently great and a pre-eminently good man—a great thinker, a great scholar, a great worker, a saintly man in private life... But he was much more. He was one of those men who appear from time to time, in different countries and on different occasions, to serve as a light to guide the footsteps of our weak and erring humanity. He was a man with a mission in life—the preacher of a new gospel, one who imparted

a new impulse to our thoughts and breathed a new hope into our hearts. And this mission was to interpret to us the new order of things that had come into existence under the dispensation of a wise Providence—to point out to us its meaning, the opportunities it offered, the responsibilities it imposed and the rich harvest that was to be gathered, if only we did not shrink from the labour that was demanded of us. And high indeed were his qualifications for delivering this message to us. A great, massive intellect, a heart that overflowed with the love of his country, an earnest and dauntless spirit, an infinite capacity for work, patience inexhaustible, and an humble faith in the purpose of Providence that nothing shook—a man so equipped could worthily undertake the task of moulding the thoughts and hopes and aspirations of his countrymen."

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To commemorate the 75 years of India's independence, National Book Trust, India under the *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav,* Government of India programme has launched a new publishing series *India@75* for young and general readers. The books under this series will reflect the momentous, yet wonderful journey of India. As a part of the series, books on freedom fighters, major achievers and events/themes that have shaped the modern India are being developed.

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